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# •EXPOSITORY WRITING•

BY

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UNION OF  
THE AMERICAS

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TO WILLIAM  
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**TO  
THE STUDENTS IN RHETORIC III  
AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
WITH WHOM I HAD PLEASANT ASSOCIATION  
FROM 1914 TO 1918**



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# EXPOSITORY WRITING

## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE AND MATERIAL OF EXPOSITION

1 "The Anglo-Saxons," Emerson said, "are the hands of the world"—they, more than any other people, turn the wheels of the world, do its work, keep things moving. Without lingering to quarrel with Emerson, or to justify him, we may safely assert that Expository Writing is the hands of literature. In a world which man even as yet only slightly understands, surrounded as he is by his fellows who constantly baffle his intelligence, and shut up within the riddle of himself, Exposition attempts to explain, to make clear, to tear away the clouds of mystery and ignorance.

2 Exposition attempts to answer the endless curiosity of man. "What is this?" man asks, of things and of ideas. "Who are you?" he addresses to his fellows. "How did this originate, what caused it, where is it going, what will it do, how is it operated?" he repeats from birth to grave. Perhaps the most interesting question in the world is the never-ending "What does this mean to me, how does it affect me, how can I use it?" These are the questions—and there are more of them—which Exposition tries to answer. Obviously, in making the answers the writing will often be garbed in the sack suit of business, will sometimes roll up its sleeves, will pull on the overalls or tie the apron. Then it may explain the workings of a machine, the wonders of a printing press, or may show the mysteries of Congressional action, or the organization of a department store, or even tell how to bake a lemon pie. But it may also appear

in the opulence of evening costume, and criticize the ensemble of an orchestra, discuss the diplomacy of Europe, address us in appreciation of the Arts. It may assume the fine informality of the fireside and give us of its most delightful charms in discussing the joys of living and learning, the whimsicalities of the world. In any case it will be answering the endless curiosity of man.

It would not be rash to say that more expository thinking is done than any other kind of mental activity. The child who dismantles a clock to find its secret is doing expository thinking; the official, of however complicated a business, who ponders ways and means, is trying to satisfy his business curiosity; the artist who studies the effect of balance, of light and shade, of exclusion or inclusion, is thinking in exposition; politicians are ceaselessly active in explaining to themselves how they may, and to their constituents how they did. We cannot escape Exposition. The question then arises, since this form of writing is always with us how can we make it effective and enjoyable?

All writing should be interesting; all really effective writing does interest. It may not be required that every reader be interested in every bit of writing — that would be too much to hope for in a world where sympathies are unfortunately so restricted. To peruse a directory of Bangkok, if one has no possible acquaintance in that city, might become tedious, though one might draw pleasure from the queer names and the suggestions of romance. But if one has a lost friend somewhere in New York, and hopes that the directory will achieve discovery, the bulky and endless volume immediately takes on the greatest interest. Lincoln, driven at length to write a recommendation for a book, to escape the importunities of an agent, wisely, whimsically, wrote, "This is just the right kind of book for any one who desires just this kind of book." Wide though his sympathies were, he recognized that not every one enjoys

everything. The problem of the writer of exposition is to make as wide an appeal as he can.

Interest in reading is of two kinds: satisfaction and stimulation. And each of these may be either intellectual or emotional or both. The interest of satisfaction largely arises when the questions which the reader brings with him to his reading are answered. A reader who desires to know what is done with the by-products in a creamery, where the skim milk goes to, will be satisfied — and interested — when he learns the complete list of uses, among them the fact that skim milk is largely made into the white buttons that make our underclothing habitable. The reader who leaves an article about these by-products with the feeling that he has been only half told is sure to be dissatisfied, and therefore uninterested. In the same way, when a reader picks up an article or a book with the desire to be thrilled with romance or wonder, to be taken for the time away from the business of the world, to be wrenched with pity for suffering or with admiration for achievement — in other words, when a reader brings a hungry emotion to his reading — if he finds satisfaction, he is interested.

The interest of stimulation may include that of satisfaction, but not necessarily. It is the interest that drives a person to further thinking or acting for himself, that loosens his own energies and makes him aware of desire for satisfaction that he did not know he had. A reader may, for example, peruse an editorial in a daily paper and find a complete array of facts, setting forth in detail the subject, and may be satisfied about the subject. He may read another editorial which will not leave him cold, indifferent, but will set his brain to churning with ideas, or may even make him clap on his hat and start forth to change things in the world. The second editorial has given him the interest of stimulation.

Writing that makes the interest of stimulation is the writ-

ing of power: to the mere satisfaction of hunger, such as one can get from eating dry oatmeal, it adds the stimulation, the joy in life that a fragrant cup of coffee would add to the oatmeal. Exposition that satisfies is adequate; that which stimulates is powerful. Obviously, some expository writing would suffer from being filled with the power to rouse the reader. Much legal writing must be addressed to the intellect alone; often the entrance of stimulation, the rousing of the emotions, will destroy the chance for justice. Obviously, again, some subjects cannot be treated to contain both kinds of interest: an account of the devastation of northern France may be as cold as a ledger in its array of facts which are to be added; it may also be so treated as to rouse a vitriolic hatred for the government that caused such devastation to be made. Each treatment is allowable, and each necessary for a perfectly proper purpose.

Let us admit, without debate, that much expository writing is stupid. Why is it thus? Largely for two reasons: the writer has not made his material mean anything to himself, and he has not made it significant for his reader. In writing exposition there is no place for him who draws his pen along like a quarry slave who is soon to be scourged to his dungeon and does not care for anything. A person who finds no interest in his subject should do one of two things: consult a physician to see if his health is normal so that he may expect reasonably vivid reactions to life and things; or choose a new subject. Interest, in other words, enters at the moment when the writing becomes related vitally to human beings, and not until that moment. Why do students enjoy reading the writings of William James? Simply because the author made his facts relate to himself and to everybody else. If a writer feels like saying, "I don't see anything interesting in this!" and yet he feels duty pointing a stern finger at composition, he should examine the subject more nearly, should see if it does not in some way affect him, does not present a

front that he is really concerned with. Suppose, for example, that the task presents itself of accounting for the use of skim milk, and suppose that the writer thinks skim milk of all things the stupidest. Well, buttons, they say, are made from it — but who cares what buttons are made from; their purpose is to hold clothes together, and that's all! But wait a bit: here are some hundreds of gallons of skim milk, from which thousands of buttons can be made. Without the milk, the buttons will be cut from shells, perhaps, at a much larger cost. Ah, the pocketbook is affected, is it — well, let's have the milk used, then. And when one stops to think of it, is it not remarkable that from a soft thing like milk a hard thing like a button should be made? Is n't man, after all, rather ingenious? Who in the world ever thought of milk buttons? Some such process the mind often passes through in its approach to a subject. At length it finds interest, and then it can write — and not before.

Here is the difference, then, between being a dumb beast of a reporter of facts, and a free agent of an interpreter. Some facts, to be sure, are in themselves so startling that mere report is sufficient. Slight comment is needed to horrify an audience at Turkish atrocities in the war. Perhaps comment would even weaken the effect. The terrible poignancy of such facts so fires the imagination that more is perhaps positively harmful. Many facts are not thus immediately translated into human experience. At first thought the fact that a new hotel will be supplied with indirect lighting seems a mere fact of trade: instead of ordering hanging chandeliers of one kind, the builder will order another kind. But thought of more fully, this fact takes on both the interest of satisfaction and that of stimulation: why did the builder decide to install the indirect system? and what will the effect be? Imagining one's self in that hotel at the end of a long and bewildering journey, with nerves on edge and eyes afame with dust, will relate the fact of choice at

once to human feelings and needs — and the subject is interesting. A reader can be made to understand the workings of the engine in a super-six automobile, and also to feel the power of it; to understand a cream separator and also to thrill to the economy of time and strength which it brings; to understand a clarinet and also to rouse to the beauty of its voice; to understand an adding machine and also to marvel at the uncanny weirdness of the invention. The writer interprets as soon as he brings his subject into relation with human life and shows its real value.

As already mentioned, care is to be exercised to use the treatment which the subject demands. An explanation, for practical purposes, of a machine lathe will be dangerous if it attempts too much imaginative stimulation: there would lurk too great a danger to material fingers. An essay, on the other hand, such as those of Lamb and Stevenson, depends largely on its imaginative interpretation, on its appeal to the interest of stimulation. For a neutral newspaper account of a football game the following heading was used: "Yesterday's game between the University of Illinois and the University of Chicago resulted in no score for either side." That is a bald report of the facts, for a neutral audience. The interpreting spirit, as it appeared at the two universities, colored the tale: "Fighting Illini tie Maroons 0-0"; and, "Maroons hold Illini to 0-0 score." These two headings, if expanded into complete articles, would color the story with interpretation for a specific audience that is vitally interested. The accounts would probably be more interesting than that of the newspaper, but they would also run the chance of being less fair.

For Webster's New International Dictionary *art* is defined as follows: "Application of skill and taste to production according to aesthetic principles; an occupation having to do with the theory or practice of taste in the expression of beauty in form, color, sound, speech, or movement." George

Gissing, making a definition of the same subject for his book, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, writes as follows:

1 It has occurred to me that one might define Art as: an expression, satisfying and abiding, of the zest for life. This is applicable to every form of Art devised by man, for, in his creative moment, whether he produce a great drama or carve a piece of foliage in wood, the artist is moved and inspired by supreme enjoyment of some aspect of the world about him; an enjoyment keener in itself than that experienced by another man, and intensified, prolonged, by the power — which comes to him we know not how — of recording in visible or audible form that emotion of rare vitality. Art, in some degree, is within the scope of every human being, were he but the ploughman who utters a few would-be melodious notes, the mere outcome of health and strength, in the field at sunrise; he sings or tries to, prompted by an unusual gusto in being, and the rude stave is all his own. Another was he, who also at the plough, sang of the daisy, or the field mouse, or shaped the rhythmic tale of Tam o' Shanter. Not only had life a zest for him incalculably stronger and subtler than that which stirs the soul of Hodge, but he uttered it in word and music such as go to the heart of mankind, and hold a magic power for ages.<sup>1</sup>

2 Of these two definitions obviously the first attempts merely to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of the reader, is a mere report of facts, and the second is interested in making an interpretation, in stimulating the reader. For most readers the words of Gissing would be more interesting; though, since a dictionary is not primarily an amusement, it is a bit unfair to mention the fact.

3 Interesting our expository writing must be; it must also be truthful. Nothing worse can be imagined than the kind of writing that forgets the facts, that remembers only the desire to please. Under the pleasing phraseology of any bit of expository writing there must be the firm structure of

<sup>1</sup> George Gissing: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

thought, and the close weave of fact. Expository writing is commonly divided into Definition and Analysis. Definition attempts to set bounds to the subject, to say "thus far and no farther," to tell what the subject is. Analysis regards the subject as composed of parts, mutually related, which together form the whole, and attempts to divide the subject into as many parts as it contains. Analysis is divided into classification and partition. Classification groups individual members according to likeness, as one might classify Americans according to color or birthplace or education or health, in every case placing those who are alike together. Partition divides an organic whole into its parts, as one might divide the United States Government into its three branches of legislative, judicial, and executive, or the character of George Washington into its components. Now definition and analysis often intermingle and help each other, and are often informally treated, but somehow, in every piece of exposition, the underlying thought must have a sound basis of one or the other or both. This will be the nucleus of the thinking; it may then be treated as a bald report or as an interpretation, aiming merely to give information or to rouse the further interest of the reader. The method of treatment will be determined by the nature of the facts and the purpose of the author in writing.

15 It cannot be too strongly stated that the underlying thought and the interest are really one, after all. As you approach a subject, and learn its character and meaning, you will be at the same time learning whether it is a subject capable of great appeal or only of slight attraction. Interest is not something laid on, but is a development from the nature of the facts themselves. The first question should be, "Is this interesting?" and then the second question may follow, "How shall I bring out the interest?" Remember that interest depends on relation to human beings; the closer the relation, the greater the interest.

Mr. Henry Labouchere, English statesman and for many years editor of *Truth* (had an ideal reaction to life,) so far as interest is concerned.) If, scanning the horizon for interest, he had bethought himself of the rather impolite advice of the Muse to Sir Philip Sidney, “‘Fool,’ said my Muse to me, ‘look in thine heart and write,’ ” he would have found, upon following the advice, a heart full of eager curiosity and readiness to be attracted to anything. The following account of one of his qualities, as related in his biography, is worth remembering when you feel like saying, “Oh, I don’t see anything interesting in that!”: “If he had encountered a burglar in his house already loaded with valuables, his first impulse would have been, not to call the police, but to engage the intruder in conversation, and to learn from him something of the habits of burglars, the latest and most scientific methods of burgling, the average profits of the business, and so forth. He would have been delighted to assist his new acquaintance with suggestions for his future guidance in his profession, and to point out to him how he might have avoided the mistake which had on this occasion led to his being caught in the act. In all this he would not by any means have lost sight of his property; on the contrary, the whole force of his intellect would have been surreptitiously occupied with the problem of recovering it with the least amount of inconvenience to his friend and himself. He would have maneuvered to bring off a deal. If by sweet reasonableness he could have persuaded the burglar to give up the ‘swag,’ he would have been delighted to hand him a sovereign or two, cheer him with refreshment, shake hands, and wish him better luck next time; and he would have related the whole story in the next week’s *Truth* with infinite humor and profound satisfaction.”

To make clear, to explain, — that is the task of exposition. Such writing does not have the excitement of the fighting-ring, which we find in argument, nor does it attain the lyric

quality of impassioned description, or the keen wild flight of narrative. It keeps its feet on the earth, tells the truth — but tells it in such a way, with so much of reaction on the writer's part, and with so strong an appeal to the reader's curiosity or imagination or sympathy, that it is interesting, that it is always adequate, and may be powerful.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW TO WRITE EXPOSITION

#### The Problem

ALL writing — except mere exercise and what the author intends for himself alone — is a problem in strategy. The successful author will always regard his writing as a problem of manipulation of material wisely chosen to accomplish an objective against the enemy. The enemy is the reader. He is armed with two terrible weapons, lack of interest and lack of comprehension. Sometimes one weapon is stronger than the other, but a wise author always has an eye for both. The strategic problem is, then, so to choose material, and so to order and express it, that the reader will be forced to become interested, to comprehend, to arrive, in other words, at the point in his feeling and thinking to which the author wishes to lead him. The author's objective is always an effect in the reader's mind. In so far as the author creates this effect he is successful. And the time to consider the effect, to make sure of its accomplishment, is before the pen touches the paper.

Sometimes the author makes a mistake in his planning, as did the composer Handel when he wrote the oratorio of "The Messiah." He placed the "Hallelujah Chorus" at the end of the oratorio. But when, toward the end of the second section, he saw from his place on the stage that the audience was not so enthusiastic as he had expected it to be at that point, he changed his plan, with practical shrewdness rushed to the front and shifted the famous chorus from the end of the third section to the end of the second, and had the satisfaction of seeing the audience so moved that first the King rose, and then, of course, the audience with him. The chorus

has stood at the end of the second part to this day; that is the place for it — it brings about the effect that Handel desired much better there than if it were saved for the end of the oratorio. The oratorio is, in other words, a greater work than it would have been had not the author kept a keen eye for the audience, for the effect, and a willingness to change his plans whenever the gaining of the effect required a change. Just so the writer should constantly scan the horizon of the reader's mind for signs of interest and for shafts of intelligence.

The effect that the writer desires in the reader's mind may be of different natures. In Baedeker's Guide-Book the aim is largely to satisfy the understanding, to meet the reader's desire for compact information. In some of Poe's tales the effect is of horror. Patrick Henry aimed primarily to rouse to vigorous action. Shakespeare wished to shed light upon the great truths of existence, to satisfy the reader's groping curiosity, and also to thrill the reader with pity and terror or with high good humor or the unrestrained laughter of roaring delight.

In so far as the author accomplishes his purpose, in just so far he is successful. When friends complimented Cicero, telling him that he was the greatest orator, he replied somewhat as follows: "Not so, for when I give an oration in the Forum people say, 'How well he speaks!' but when Demosthenes addressed the people they rose and shouted, 'Come, let us up and fight the Macedonians!'" If Cicero was correct in his estimate, Demosthenes was the greater orator — of that there can be no doubt — for he gained his effect. President Wilson's great war messages had as one of their objects, certainly, the rousing in American hearts of a high thrill to the lofty object for which they fought, the overcoming of might with right. The remarkable success of the messages attests the author's power.

Now the author will accomplish this effect in the reader's

mind only if his writing "takes hold," and it will "take hold" only if it is weighty, that is, only if it bears toward the desired end in every part and in every implication. This is as true in writings that aim at light, frivolous effects as in those that stir the deeper emotions, in writing that aims at the understanding almost alone as in that which strives not only to make clear but to infuse with deathless appeal to the heart. A treatise on the fourth dimension must bear, in every stroke, toward the complete satisfaction of the reader's intellectual curiosity; a comedy must lay down each word in the intention of liberating the silver laughter of humor; a tragedy must leave us in every implication serious, even in its introduction of comical material to heighten the tragic nature of the whole. To make every word bear in the one general direction — that is the writer's task. In no other way can he move the reader's mind and heart as he wishes to.

An author finds, however, that to gain the desired effect requires skillful manipulation on his part. He confronts a mass of refractory material, often full of contradictions, in which any potential effect seems almost as difficult to discover as the proverbial needle in the well-known haystack. For example, when a historian sits down, one hundred years hence, to the task of explaining the Great War, he will be confronted with an amazing welter of endless facts, tendencies, personal, national, and racial ambitions, enmities, competitions in trade, language, customs, indiscretions of diplomats, inscrutable moves of controlling powers, checks and counter checks, assertion and denial, accusation and assurance of innocence, bribery and plots and spy systems, amateur comment in newspaper and magazine, defenses by people who have retained their poise and other defenses by those whose faculties have been unseated by the awful strain of war — and everywhere he will find the endless array of events and detailed facts of organization of civil and military life to mold somehow into a consistent, intelligible whole.

Well may he say that the task is too great for mortal man. Yet somehow the history is to be written, somehow the effect that he wishes is to be gained. Obviously the great prime task is to unify, to bring order out of chaos, to create from formless material a real edifice of thought. Exactly the same task awaits the writer of any kind of literature; in a short theme no less, the first great duty is to find some principle whereby the author can exclude the useless and include what is of value.

The first question to ask is — and it is also the last and the intervening question — “What am I trying to accomplish?” At first thought this question may seem the most obvious, the most elementary, and the least helpful query possible. But upon its being successfully met depends the whole success of the writing, whether of choosing or ordering or proportioning the material, or of expressing the selected ideas. For, since the chief task before the writer is to make his thoughts and his expression drive in one direction, so that the whole composition is simplified in the reader’s mind, is unified and given an organic existence, even the choice of words, upon which depends so much of the tone of the composition, is largely settled by the answer to this question of what the author hopes to accomplish.

In Exposition, the explaining the relations among things and ideas, we are commonly told that we must “cover the ground,” must “stick to the subject,” must “include whatever is valuable and reject the rest.” But such directions are insufficient. Until I have some touchstone, some applicable standard, I cannot tell whether material is valuable or not. It is as if one were brought into the presence of multifarious building material, — wood both hard and soft, cement and the other ingredients of concrete, bricks, stucco, and steel beams, and terra cotta tiles, — and then were requested to build a house, using whatever of the material might be of value, and removing the rest. The builder would be non-

plussed. He cannot build, now with wood, now with stone, and again with tile; if he did, the saying would be all too true, "There's no place like home!" He can do nothing reasonable until he has been informed as to the kind of house desired, until he is given a principle of selection. Then, if he has been bidden to make a brick house, he at once knows what his object is, and can then reject whatever does not help him, in the accomplishment. In the same way, if I am asked to write five thousand words about Horticulture, I am at a loss to choose from the history of the science, or the present status, or the still unsolved problems, or the relative advancement in different countries, or the possibility of the pursuit of horticulture as a profession, or the poetic, the imaginative stimulus of working among apple blossoms, or the value to health of working in the open air. Perhaps any one of these divisions of the total subject would require five thousand words; certainly with so limited an amount of material of expression I cannot cover all; and if I choose a bit of each, the result will hopelessly confuse the reader as to the science, for I shall perforce write a series of mere *disjuncta membra*. I must, then, choose at once some guiding principle of selection that will make clear whether, for instance, the poetic appeal of the science has anything to do with my object. Then, and only then, shall I be able to write an article that will "take hold," that will bear in every part toward some definite goal, that will leave my reader with a well-organized, easily understood piece of writing. Only thus can I escape making a mere enumeration about as sensible as to add potatoes and church steeples and treasurers' reports and feather boas and card parties and library paste in the hope of making an integral whole. This guiding idea, which avoids such selections, may perhaps best be called the "controlling purpose" of the theme or article or book.

### The Controlling Purpose

*What, then, is the controlling purpose? (It is the answer to the question, "What am I trying to accomplish?" It is the intelligent determination on the writer's part to make the material of his writing march straight toward a definite goal which he wishes the reader to perceive. It is the actively operating point of view of the writer, the positive angle of vision that he takes toward the subject.* The controlling purpose in Lincoln's mind as he rode up to Gettysburg must have been to bring home to the civilians of the country, with a great humble thrill toward accomplishment, the fact that after the soldiers had done all they could, the civilians must reverently take up the fight for freedom and union. His address is immortal. But suppose, for a moment, that he had ascended the platform with the vague idea of "saying something about America, the war, you know, and the soldiers, and liberty, — oh, yes, Liberty, of course, — and, oh, things in general." Though he had thundered for hours his words would likely have been ineffective. Only an intense realization of the purpose in one's mind, and a consistent bending of one's efforts to gain this end, bring simplicity, weightiness, and the powerful effect in the reader's mind. From the reader's point of view, in fact, we might say that the controlling purpose is the means of making writing interesting, since nothing so holds a reader's mind as to feel that he is getting somewhere, that he is accomplishing something by his efforts. In no other way can he be made so clearly to see his progress, for only thus can he be prevented from undirected wandering.

### Source of the Controlling Purpose

#### a. *The Subject itself*

When we ask how we shall find and choose the controlling purpose, we discover that it is determined by three things:

the subject itself, the personality of the writer, and the character of the reader. Just how these three operate to determine the cast of the writing we shall now attempt to discover.

The first thing for the writer to do is to look at the subject itself and learn what it is, really understand it. He must know its exact nature before he can be allowed to proceed with the development. Now this often requires much honesty, for it is necessary to put aside prejudice and bias of all kinds and to look at the subject just as it is, with a passionate desire to learn its exact nature. For example, if you are to write about the value of a college education, and you are an idealist, you may be tempted to overlook the fact that such a training does actually help a man to earn more money than he otherwise would. You may think that such a consideration is beneath your dignity. But you must put aside your prejudice for the time being and must look the fact honestly in the face. And, if you are a hard-headed, practical person, you must nevertheless admit that a college education is broadening, chastening, in its influence. In either case you will not stop until you have looked at all possible sides of the subject. You will amass such facts, then, as that a college education is broadening, that it increases earning capacity, that it puts a person in touch with the world, that it makes him more able to be a useful citizen. Other facts also will occur to you, but let us suppose that these are the most important. If you carefully examine them you will perhaps come to the conclusion that a college education is valuable in that it helps a person to realize his best possibilities in every way, as a citizen, a friend, a personality. Or, if you are to write about the aeroplane, you will discover that it is heavier than air, that it is propelled by motor-power, that it attains certain speeds, that it has definite lifting power, that it is self-stabilizing to a remarkable degree, that it is made of certain kinds of

material, of certain weight, and that it has one, or two, or even three planes. In addition you will note the qualities of efficiency, of triumphing over winds, of beautiful poise, and smoothness of execution. In both these cases you have been seeking the core of your subject, the real meaning of it, its essence. You must, before you begin to write a word, be able to say what all the noticed facts amount to, to say, "All told, this subject, this machine, or whatever it is, means so-and-so." Perhaps of the aeroplane you would say, "This machine stands for wonderful potential efficiency, not yet completely understood." In the same way we say of people and things, "He is a bore," or "a tyrant," or, "That is a great social menace," or some other such comment. In each case we have tagged the person or thing with what we think it is at its heart, with its total significance. And not until we have done this are we at all ready to begin writing.

### *b. The Writer's Attitude*

The second influence in determining the controlling purpose is the reaction of the writer to the subject. In the following estimate of Lord Morley, the great English statesman, you will notice that, though the treatment seems to be, at first, purely objective, quite impersonal, the author cannot keep himself out. He enters with the fifth word, "thrilling," in which he shows where he stands himself in regard to truth, and he appears more at length in the last two clauses of the selection, where he definitely set the approval of his own heart upon Lord Morley's attitude. The third influence, that of the reader, appears also, for when you consider that the article was written for Englishmen to read, you see the molding for the national temper, different of necessity from that which would have been made for Frenchmen, for example. The author relies upon a knowledge of Morley among his readers, and upon a certain definite attitude among them toward the truth.

You will catch that thrilling note in the oratory of Lord Morley at all times, for he touches politics with a certain spiritual emotion that makes it less a business or a game than a religion. He lifts it out of the street on to the high lands where the view is wide and the air pure and where the voices heard are the voices that do not bewilder or betray. He is the conscience of the political world — the barometer of our corporate soul. Tap him and you will see whether we are at "foul" or "fair." He has often been on the losing side: sometimes perhaps on the wrong side: never on the side of wrong. He is

True as a dial to the sun,  
Although it be not shined upon.

There is about him a sense of the splendid austerity of truth — cold but exhilarating. It is not merely that he does not lie. There are some other politicians of whom that may be said. It is that he does not trifl[e] with truth. It is sacred and inviolate. He would not admit with Erasmus that "there are seasons when we must even conceal truth," still less with Fouché that "les paroles sont faites pour cacher nos pensées."<sup>1</sup> His regard for the truth is expressed in the motto to the essay "On Compromise": "It makes all the difference in the world whether we put truth in the first place or in the second." This inflexible veracity is the rarest and the most precious virtue in politics. It made him, if not, as Trevelyan says of Macaulay, "the worst popular candidate since Coriolanus," at least a severe test of a constituency's attachment. It is Lord Morley's contribution to the common stock. Truth and Justice — these are the fixed stars by which he steers his barque, and even the Prayer Book places Religion and Piety after them, for indeed they are the true foundation of religion and piety.<sup>2</sup>

The second consideration, then, is, "What does this subject mean to me?" Of course there are subjects in which this question is of slight importance: in writing a treatise on mathematics, for instance, one might be quite indifferent to any personal reaction, though in even such a piece of writ-

<sup>1</sup> Words were made to conceal our thoughts.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. Gardiner: *Prophets, Priests, and Kings*. By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

ing there might appear a thrill at the neat marshaling of forces for the inevitable waiting answer to the problem. In general, however, this question is of great importance. Stevenson goes so far as even to say that the author's attitude is more important than the facts themselves. Certainly a writer cannot tell what is the truth for himself unless he expresses his ideas in the light of his own personality. Suppose that in the case of the aeroplane, though you believe the central fact as we expressed it above, you are primarily appealed to by the fact that the motor is of the utmost importance, and that at present it is not so highly developed as it should be for perfect flying. You are, in other words, impressed with the problem that confronts engineers of making the motor more efficient. Your controlling purpose would now be modified, then, and would perhaps read, "The aeroplane is a machine of wonderful potential efficiency not yet completely understood, *especially as regards the driving power*. In the same way you would modify the purpose of the treatment of college education and might say, "A college education is valuable in that it helps a person to realize his best possibilities in every way, but *especially as an heir of all the wisdom of the ages gone*."

The relative importance of this second consideration depends on whether the subject is much or little affected by personal interpretation. In the personal essay, as written by Lamb, for example, we may care more for the man than for the facts, or more for the facts as seen by the man than for the mere facts alone. In questions of society, of morality, of taste, in which the answer is not absolute in any case, in all matters that affect the well-being of humanity and in which there is a shifting standard, the attitude of the writer is important. The writer who wishes to have a voice of authority must cling to the fact as to a priceless jewel, but he must also remember that if, for example, he is writing on Feminism, or Socialism, or Church Attendance, or The

Short Ballot, or The New Poetry, or The Value of Social Clubs in the Country, or any such subject, we, the readers, eagerly wait on his words as being primarily an expression of his personal reaction to the matter. And the final value of the treatment will depend on whether the personality is well-poised, largely sympathetic, able to take an elastic view of the subject and to bring it home to the reader as a piece of warmly felt and honestly stated conviction. In exposition, as well as in argument, we must ask the witness, — that is, the writer, — whether he is prejudiced or not. Especially must we do this when we happen to be the author ourselves. Violent condemnation of Capital by a man who has become embittered by mistreatment at the hands of employers must be taken with somewhat of caution, just as sweeping arraignment of Socialism by an arrogant capitalist must be eyed askance.

It might not be amiss to remark here that the writer in a college class who declares that he has no reaction to his subject, that he is quite indifferent to it, should do one of two things, either choose a new subject, or drop from college and go to work at some vitalizing effort with other people which will bring home realities to him in such a way that he cannot fail to react.

In the following brief incident it is interesting to note how the author shows his own personality. Another would have thought of the problem of dietetics involved, or of the absence of coffee or "parritch" or the rasher of bacon, or of the austerity of the meal. To Gissing<sup>1</sup> the incident was significant as showing a national characteristic both admirable and amusing.

At an inn in the north I once heard three men talking at their breakfast on the question of diet. They agreed that most people ate too much meat, and one of them went so far as to declare that,

<sup>1</sup> George Gissing: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecraft*, "Summer," xxi. By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

for his part, he rather preferred vegetables and fruit. "Why," he said, "will you believe me that I sometimes make a breakfast of apples?" This announcement was received in silence; evidently the two listeners did n't quite know what to think of it. Thereupon the speaker, in rather a blustering tone, cried out, "Yes, I can make a very good breakfast on *two or three pounds of apples.*"

Was n't it amusing? And was n't it characteristic? This honest Briton had gone too far in frankness. 'T is all very well to like vegetables and fruit up to a certain point; but to breakfast on apples! His companions' silence proved that they were just a little ashamed of him; his confession savoured of poverty or meanness; to right himself in their opinion, nothing better occurred to the man than to protest that he ate apples, yes, but not merely one or two; he ate them largely, *by the pound!* I laughed at the fellow, but I thoroughly understood him; so would every Englishman; for at the root of our being is a hatred of parsimony. This manifests itself in all manner of ludicrous or contemptible forms, but no less is it the source of our finest qualities. An Englishman desires, above all, to live largely; on that account he not only dreads but hates and despises poverty. His virtues are those of the free-handed and warm-hearted opulent man; his weaknesses come of the sense of inferiority (intensely painful and humiliating) which attaches in his mind to one who cannot spend and give; his vices, for the most part, originate in loss of self-respect due to loss of secure position.

### c. *The Reader*

The third consideration is, "Who is my reader, and what are his characteristics?" The counter-question, "What difference does it make who my reader is?" can be summarily answered with the statement that it makes a great deal of difference. As soon as you note what a large part temperament plays in the forming of opinions in politics and religion and social questions, and remember that no two people ever react to any truth in exactly the same way — that what seems to one sensible person monstrous will appear to another equally sensible person as highly

virtuous — you will see that in all writing, where either the understanding or the emotions are involved, this question assumes importance. If we believe the theory with which we set out, that all writing is done to accomplish an object, that is, a certain effect in the reader's mind, and then remember that different readers take different trails to the same objective, and that some must be even coaxed back from one trail into another, we shall see that it is vital that the reader do not select the wrong way, and, like a futile dog, "bark up the wrong tree." A hasty glance at current magazines will at once show how operative this consideration is in practical writing: *The Atlantic Monthly* uses a different set of subjects and a different style of expression from that of *The Scientific American* or *The Black Cat* or *The Parisienne*. The editors, in other words, are remembering who their readers are and are trying to meet them with gifts, not with weapons of offense. After all, the reader is always the destination of all writing; the place where the effect will be made is the reader's mind.

To apply this third consideration to our two subjects, the value of a college education and the aeroplane, let us see how (the treatment should differ according to the differing readers.) If, in the treatment of the first subject, we are presenting our statements to a body of educators, even though the facts of college education remain unmoved, and though our personal leaning toward the supreme value in dowering the student with the wisdom of the past is unchanged, we shall yet see that these educators have already thought as we have about the matter, that merely to repeat to them will be futile and wearying; and we shall, if we are wise, change the point of attack and develop the value as enabling the student to *apply to practical problems the wisdom of the past*. Or, if the readers are to be politicians whom we wish to enlist in sympathy with larger endowments, we shall perhaps treat the subject as being *increased political insight*.

*and sympathy with all people.* In the treatment of the aeroplane, if we are presenting our words to engineers, we shall probably analyze the present lack of proper engine power and try to suggest means of correction. And we shall make our presentation in language that has not been stripped of its technicalities but has been allowed to stand in engineering terms. But if we address a body of benevolent women who are trying to organize an "Airmen's Relief Fund," and who look upon the machine with horror as a potential destroyer of life, we shall simply show that *accidents may be caused through faulty engines which may often result in loss of life.* The original controlling purpose will now appear, "The value of a college education lies in its offering the best chance for personal development through showing to the student his heirship to all the wisdom of the ages past, especially as this is applied to present-day problems," or, "The aeroplane is a machine of great potential efficiency not yet completely understood, especially as regards the driving power, through which lack of understanding grave accidents may occur."

Now if we scan these two statements carefully, I believe that we shall be persuaded of their inadequacy. To explain to the benevolent women who are interested in saving lives the fact that we do not yet fully understand the aeroplane, is like attempting to persuade a man from the path of an oncoming thunderous locomotive by telling him of the lack of laws to regulate public safety. In other words, we have forgotten that a wedge makes the easiest entrance, and we have attacked on far too broad a front, have failed to whittle away the chips that are of no value to the reader. Perhaps we need a complete restatement of the controlling purpose, occasioned by the nature of the reader. We may say that the value of a college education is in enabling a student to be of service to the state by applying the wisdom of the past, or that the aeroplane, partly through our ignorance of it,

is causing terrible accidents. These purposes are far different from those with which we started out. All are perfectly true; these are better adapted to our particular readers, are more useful in helping to accomplish our selected aim. The gist of the matter is this: wisdom in writing demands that we discover the special loophole through which our readers regard the subject and then bring our material within the view from that loophole, bearing in mind always the training and the prejudices of the reader, and conforming material to suit the special needs.)

One large reason why college themes are liable to dullness is the fact that few students write for any one in particular. They merely put down colorless facts which do not stir a reader in the slightest. They forget that facts exist, really, only as they relate to people, individual people, and that they must be clothed attractively, as is virtue for a child's consumption, or the reader will have none of them. Even the patient writer of themes should regard a specially chosen reader as at the same time his best friend and his potentially worst enemy: friend in the sense of recipient of literary gifts, and enemy in the sense of possible foiler of all the author's good intentions. As enemy the reader must be conquered, must be made to read and understand; as friend he is to be sympathetically met and smiled upon. (And if there be no reader determined by the circumstances, the writer should choose some well-known friend and adapt his material to that friend, or should select any ordinarily intelligent being and use the widest appeal that he can.)

#### *d. Relative Value of Sources*

Now the relative value of these three sources of the controlling purpose is variable. ) In an article for the encyclopædia the writer's reaction should be subordinated, since the reader comes to the encyclopædia for facts and not for opinion. Likewise the reader, in such an article, will be of minor im-

portance, for the article is addressed to general ordinary intelligence that desires a straightforward statement. But as we have seen, an article on Feminism must with the greatest care watch the reader and the writer — the reader because the subject rouses both assent and opposition; the writer because the subject is of the kind that depend largely on opinion. So a theme on the problem of the hired man, or Tennyson's attitude toward science, or the reasons for attending one university rather than another, or the value of mechanical stokers, or the application of Mendel's Law to human beings will vary its purpose according to the varying importance of the three sources. Only one great caution needs to be made. (Never falsify or mistreat the facts: they are the supreme thing.) It is for this fault that the newspapers are most blameable: they consider their readers and their own points of view, but all too often they treat the facts cavalierly. A high reverence for the truth, and an unflinching determination to tell it are prime essentials.

### The Controlling Purpose and the Emotional Reaction

So far we have been concerned with the problem of placing the *facts* before the reader, of appealing to his intelligence. But writing consists of vastly more than that alone. After the understanding, sometimes before, must be considered the emotions. We have the facts, we know what we think of them, and we are reasonably sure of the reader's attitude. Now we must discover how to set the reader's emotions afire in so far as we desire such an effect. In listening to a great tragedy we perceive the cold analysis of a great truth of life; but that is not all: far out beyond the bounds of understanding our emotions are profoundly stirred and we *feel* pity and terror. So in the account of a tremendous battle, of a fire, of anything that touches human life at all nearly and with power, our emotions are called into play. Now different pieces of writing, just like different subjects, call

for different degrees of emotional reaction. Drama always rouses us, lyric poems depend upon their emotional quality, the informal essay has much emotional appeal, fiction of any sort stirs our feelings, and the more powerful the writing is, the more sure the appeal.

At first thought most expository writing might be considered to make slight appeal if any to emotions. That is not necessarily true (the more effective the exposition, the more real is usually the call to feeling.) Often this call is subtle, usually it is subordinate to the appeal to the understanding, but in most effective expository writing it will be found. In an explanation of the Panama Canal certainly there would be roused the reader's admiration and wonder at the magnitude of the operation. The mere analysis of the facts in a criminal trial often settles the case, so great is the emotional appeal. In didactic writing the call to emotion is less strong, though such a writer as Jonathan Edwards could explain the writhing of man like a spider before the Almighty in a profoundly moving way. In axiomatic mathematical propositions we find perhaps the least strong appeal: that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles might seem to be divorced from all excitement. But in most exposition when emotional appeal is overlooked the writing suffers.

In an account of the American Civil War, for example, the writer might set out to show that the conflict was the culmination of the struggle between yeoman and cavalier begun long since in England. But the war meant more than that. The author will then see the emotional significance of the fight and will add to his purpose the intention to thrill the reader at the magnificent exhibition, on both sides, of devotion to an idea. So Emerson, in his essay on "Fate" in *The Conduct of Life*, fills the reader with gloom for page after page, detailing how thoroughly the individual is bound down by conditions of birth, sex, breeding, wealth — and then in

two wonderful sentences he turns the whole course of thought and emotion by saying, "Intellect annuls fate. So far as a man thinks, he is free," and the reader is stirred as with a trumpet call to renewed courage, which, to use Emerson's words, "neither brandy, nor nectar, nor sulphuric ether, nor hell-fire, nor ~~ichor~~, nor poetry, nor genius" can overcome. And the historian Greene, in his well-known account of Queen Elizabeth, states his controlling purpose in the words, "Elizabeth was at once the daughter of Henry and of Anne Boleyn." But these words are not the whole of his purpose; he intends, besides the intellectual grasping of the Queen's character, an intense admiration and wonder at the resourcefulness, the shrewd judgment, and a reaction of amusement to the strange outbreaks of unwomanly freaks or of feminine wiles.

The controlling purpose, then, is almost always of a dual nature; it aims at both the understanding and the emotions. Whenever there is any real possibility of making it thus double the writer should so express it to himself.

In the following magazine article such a double purpose obviously exists. First of all there are the facts of the marching of American troops through London. These facts are unchangeable. Baldly stated, the significance of the fact is that the New World is coming to the help of the Old World against the monster of unrestrained militarism. To a person who regards life coldly, as the mere interplay of calculable forces, one whose emotions are not concerned, this would be a sufficient statement of the whole truth, of the total significance. But such writing would miss the chance of power, would be forever less valuable than it ought to be, for a great warming of the heart answers those footfalls in London streets. In other words, just as we have seen that there are two kinds of exposition — mere noting of facts and interpreting of facts — so we now see that interpretation can be either lifeless, or moving, charged with power. It is

the old difference between the drama and a sermon: the play thrills and the sermon convinces. Either may add the other quality — a fine drama or a well-made sermon does. In this account of American soldiers in London the truth is made clear, but far more than that it is made alive, pulsating with emotion of national pride, of racial solidarity, of high moral purpose. In so far as the writer succeeds in stirring us, in just so far he is more likely to make the truth take hold upon us and bind us firmly in its grasp. It is the writing that both convinces and moves us that is lasting, that is really powerful.

#### **"SOLEMN-LOOKING BLOKES"<sup>1</sup>**

At midday on August 15 I stood on the pavement in Cockspur Street and watched the first contingent of American troops pass through London.

I had been attracted thither by the lure of a public "show," by the blare of a band, and by a subconscious desire to pay tribute in my small way to a great people. It was a good day for London, intermittently bright, with great scurrying masses of cumuli overhead, and a characteristic threat of rain, which fortunately held off. Cockspur Street, as you know, is a turning off Trafalgar Square, and I chose it because the crowd was less dense there than in the square itself. By getting behind a group of shortish people and by standing on tiptoe I caught a fleeting view of the faces of nearly every one of the passing soldiers.

London is schooled to shows of this kind. The people gather and wait patiently on the line of route. And then some genial policemen appear and mother the people back into some sort of line, an action performed with little fuss or trouble. Then mounted police appear, headed by some fat official in a cockade hat and with many ribbons on his chest. And some one in the crowd calls out:

"Hullo, Percy! Mind you don't fall off yer 'orse!"

Then the hearers laugh and begin to be on good terms with them-

<sup>1</sup> Stacy Aumonier, in *The Century Magazine*, December, 1917. By courtesy of the publisher, The Century Company, New York City.

selves, for they know that the "show" is coming. Then follows the inevitable band, and we begin to cheer.

It is very easy and natural for a London crowd to cheer. I have heard Kaiser William II cheered in the streets of London! We always cheer our guests, and we love a band and a "show" almost as much as our republican friends across the channel. I have seen royal funerals and weddings, processions in honor of visiting presidents and kings, the return of victorious generals, processions of Canadian, Australian, Indian, French, and Italian troops and bands. I would n't miss these things for worlds. They give color to our social life and accent to our everyday emotions. It is, moreover, peculiarly interesting to observe national traits on a march: the French, with their exuberant élan, throwing kisses to the women as they pass; our own Tommies, who have surprised the world with their gayety, and keep up a constant ragging intercourse with the crowd and cannot cease from singing; the Indians, who pass like a splendidly carved frieze; the Canadians, who move with a free and independent swing and grin in a friendly way; the Scotch, who carry it off better than any one. But I had never seen American troops, and I was anxious to see how they behaved. I said to myself, "The American is volatile and impressionable, like a child." I had met Americans who within an hour's acquaintance had told me their life-story, given me their views on religion, politics, and art, and invited me to go out to Iowa or Wisconsin or California, and spend the summer with them. Moreover, the American is above all things emotional and — may I say it? — sentimental. It would therefore be extremely interesting to see how he came through this ordeal.

The first band passed, and the people were waving flags and handkerchiefs from the windows. We could hear the cheers go up from the great throng in the square. And there at last, sure enough, was Old Glory, with its silken tassels floating in the London breeze, carried by a solemn giant, with another on either side.

And then they came, marching in fours, with their rifles at the slope, the vanguard of Uncle Sam's army. And we in Cockspur Street raised a mighty cheer. They were solemn, bronzed men, loose of limb, hard, and strong, with a curious set expression of purpose about them.

*Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.*

And they looked neither to the right nor the left; nor did they look up or smile or apparently take any notice of the cheers we raised. We strained forward to see their faces, and we cried out to them our welcome.

*Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.*

They were not all tall; some were short and wiry. Some of the officers were rather elderly and wore horn spectacles. But they did not look at us or raise a smile of response. They held themselves very erect, but their eyes were cast down or fixed upon the back of the man in front of them. There came an interval, and another band, and then Old Glory once more, and we cheered the flag even more than the men. Fully a thousand men passed in this solemn procession, not one of them smiling or looking up. It became almost disconcerting. It was a thing we were not used to. A fellow-cockney near me murmured:

"They're solemn-looking blokes, ain't they?"

*Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.*

The band blared forth once more, a drum-and-fife corps with a vibrant thrill behind it. We strained forward more eagerly to see the faces of our friends from the New World. We loved it best when the sound of the band had died away and the only music was the steady throb of those friendly boots upon our London streets. And still they did not smile. I had a brief moment of some vague apprehension, as though something could not be quite right. Some such wave, I think, was passing through the crowd. What did it mean?

*Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.*

The cheers died away for a few moments in an exhausted diminuendo. Among those people, racked by three years of strain and suffering, there probably was not one who had not lost some one dear to them. Even the best nerves have their limit of endurance. Suddenly the ready voice of a woman from the pavement called out:

"God bless you, Sammy!"

And then we cheered again in a different key, and I noticed a boy in the ranks throw back his head and look up. On his face was the expression we see only on the faces of those who know the finer sensibilities — a fierce, exultant joy that is very near akin to tears.

And gradually I became aware that on the faces of these grim men was written an emotion almost too deep for expression.

As they passed it was easy to detect their ethnological heritage. There was the Anglo-Saxon type, perhaps predominant; the Celt; the Slav; the Latin; and in many cases definitely the Teuton: and yet there was not one of them that had not something else, who was not preeminently a good "United States man." It was as though upon the anvil of the New World all the troubles of the Old, after being passed through a white-hot furnace, had been forged into something clear and splendid. And they were hurrying on to get this accomplished. For once and all the matter must be settled.

*Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.*

There was a slight congestion, and the body of men near me halted and marked time. A diminutive officer with a pointed beard was walking alone. A woman in the crowd leaned forward and waved an American flag in his face. He saluted, made some kindly remark, and then passed on.

*Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.*

The world must be made safe for democracy.

And I thought inevitably of the story of the Titan myth, of Prometheus, the first real democrat, who held out against the gods because they despised humanity. And they nailed him to a rock, and cut off his eyelids, and a vulture fed upon his entrails.

But Prometheus held on, his line of reasoning being:

"After Uranus came Cronus. After Cronus came Zeus. After Zeus will come other gods."

It is the finest epic in human life, and all the great teachers and reformers who came after told the same story — Christ, Vishnu, Confucius, Mohammed, Luther, Shakespeare. The fundamental basis of their teaching was love and faith in humanity. And whenever humanity is threatened, the fires which Prometheus stole from the gods will burn more brightly in the heart of man, and they will come from all quarters of the world.

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;  
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible, swift sword.

There is no quarter, no mercy, to the enemies of humanity. There is no longer a war; it is a crusade. And as I stood on the

flags of Cockspur Street, I think I understood the silence of those grim men. They seemed to epitomize not merely a nation, not merely a flag, but the unbreakable sanctity of human rights and human life. And I knew that whatever might happen, whatever the powers of darkness might devise, whatever cunning schemes or diabolical plans, or whatever temporary successes they might attain, they would ultimately go down into the dust before "the fateful lightning." "After Zeus will come other gods."

*Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.*

Nothing could live and endure against that steady and irresistible progression. And we know how you can do things, America. We have seen your workshops, your factories, and your engines of peace. And we have seen those young men of yours at the Olympic Games, with their loose, supple limbs, their square, strong faces. When the Spartans, lightly clad, but girt for war, ran across the hills to Athens and, finding the Persian hosts defeated, laughed, and congratulated the Athenians, and ran back again — since those days there never were such runners, such athletes, as these boys of yours from Yale and Harvard, Princeton and Cornell.

And so on that day, if we cheered the flag more than we cheered the men, it was because the flag was the symbol of the men's hearts, which were too charged with the fires of Prometheus to trust themselves expression.

At least that is how it appeared to me on that forenoon in Cockspur Street, and I know that later in the day, when I met a casual friend, and he addressed me with the usual formula of the day:

"Any news?"

I was able to say:

"Yes, the best news in the world."

And when he replied:

"What news?"

I could say with all sincerity:

"I have seen a portent. The world is safe for democracy."

### Proper Use of the Controlling Purpose

Despite whatever of good has been said here about the controlling purpose, there may lurk the suspicion that it is,

after all, dangerous, that perhaps it gives to a piece of writing a tendency toward bias, partial interpretation, even unfairness, and that it makes toward incompleteness. In the first place, in answering this charge, we must remember that facts as related to people are eternally subject to different interpretations according to shifting significance, which is determined largely by the individual to whom the facts are related.) In the second place we have to remind ourselves that seldom does a writer try to say all that can be said about his subject.) Much is always either implied or left to another piece of writing. And finally, even when an author attempts perfect completeness and objectivity, he usually addresses his work to some one in particular, even though the "some one" is as vague as the general reading public; and that some one has a particular attitude that must be borne in mind.

In "Solemn-Looking Blokes" not everything about the subject is said. From one point of view the tramp of American feet in London streets signified that the United States had emerged from its traditional aloofness and had joined the main current of the world; from another, that a tremendous military preparation was going on in America, the first fruits of which were those solemn ringing steps; from another, that however Europe had professed to despise American power, she was now willing, eager, to accept American aid; from another, that the old enmity between England and America has been forgotten in the common bond of like ideals and racial traditions. Each of these possible meanings — and there are more not listed here — is implied in the treatment actually given to the subject. No one of them is really developed. Instead, we have flowering before us the idea that the world is to be made safe for democracy. No one would presume to declare that the total possibilities of the subject are here met and explained; yet no one can rightly say that the chosen treatment is unfair. Considering the

facts, the author, and the people who would read the article, and their emotional connection with the facts, we see that the author chose the purpose that seemed most useful — to make American hearts warm to the fact that their country was helping to make the world safer for all men everywhere. In other words, facts are useful only in so far as they accomplish some definite end, which, in writing, is to make the reader see the truth as the author thinks that he should try to make the reader see it.

Now, of course, if the writer makes an unfair analysis, if he blindly or willfully falsifies in seeing or expressing his subject, his writing is not only useless but actually vicious. The analysis must be correct. Every subject has its center of truth, which can be discovered by patient clear thinking; if the thinking be either unclear or impatient, the interpretation will be false. If the author of "Solemn-Looking Blokes" has made an incorrect estimate, his writing is futile. There is no more challenging quest than the search for the real truth at the core of a chosen subject. Perhaps the very difficulty of attaining success is what has stayed many minds in floundering, timid, fogginess.

As to the charge that infusion of emotional quality into the writing produces bias, first of all it must be said that if the subject contains no emotion, none should be attempted in the writing. In a report, for example, of the relative value of different woods for shingles, an author will hardly try to infuse emotion, for the reader wishes to learn, quickly and easily, just what kind of wood is the best. But most subjects are not thus aloof; even the report about shingles becomes of vast significance to the owner of extensive timber lands which are suddenly found to be of high value. All subjects which concern the prosperity and happiness of humanity are charged with emotion; the nearer to the great facts of life, such as birth, marriage, death, food, shelter, love, hatred, the keener the emotion. Who shall write of prob-

lems of heredity and leave us unstirred? Who shall treat of our vast irrigation projects, which turn the deserts into fair gardens and give food to millions of people, without firing the imagination? The writer's task is to look so clearly at his subject that he discovers its true value to both brain and heart.

As a matter of fact, in writing of such subjects a writer finds that words *will be* emotional, whether he will have them so or not, that they take sides, are charged with tendency and fly toward or away from an emotional quality with all the power of electricity. Now, this (emotional quality) when it is uncontrolled, is dangerous. Words that show tendency must be guided with the firm hand lest they lead the reader into wrong impressions and into the confusion that comes from counter emotions, the strong impression of disunion. It is only by relating these cross-tendencies to a guiding idea that they can be made to serve the author's purpose. To choose wisely a controlling purpose that recognizes and handles the inherent emotions of words is merely to organize inescapable material. In the following selection from Emerson's "Fate" we find the emotional quality both high and well-organized. Such a paragraph might easily be made to confuse a reader hopelessly, but Emerson drives the chargers of his thought straight to his goal, intellectual and emotional, and holds tight his reins:

*Topic sentence*

Nature is no sentimentalist, — does not cosset or pamper us. We must see that the world is rough and surly, and will not mind drowning a man or a woman, but swallows your ship like a grain of dust. The cold, inconsiderate of persons, tingles your blood, benumbs your feet, freezes a man like an apple. The diseases, the elements, fortune, gravity, lightning, respect no persons. The way of Providence is a little rude. The habit of snake and spider, the snap of the tiger and other leapers and bloody jumpers, the crackle of the bones of his prey in the coil of the anaconda, — these are in the system, and our habits are like theirs. You have just

dined, and however the slaughter-house is concealed in the graceful distance of miles, there is complicity, expensive races — race living at the expense of race. The planet is liable to shocks from comets, perturbations from planets, rendings from earthquake and volcano, alterations of climate, precessions of equinoxes. Rivers dry up by opening of the forest. The sea changes its bed. Towns and counties fall into it. At Lisbon an earthquake killed men like flies. At Naples three years ago ten thousand persons were crushed in a few minutes. The scurvy at sea, the sword of the climate in the west of Africa, at Cayenne, at Panama, at New Orleans, cut off men like a massacre. Our western prairies shake with fever and ague. The cholera, the small-pox, have proved as mortal to some tribes as a frost to crickets, which, having filled the summer with noise, are silenced by the fall of the temperature of one night. Without uncovering what does not concern us, or counting how many species of parasites hang on a bombyx, or groping after intestinal parasites or infusory biters, or the obscurities of alternate generation, — the forms of the shark, the *labrus*, the jaw of the sea-wolf paved with crushing teeth, the weapons of the grampus, and other warriors hidden in the sea, are hints of ferocity in the interior of nature. Let us not deny it up and down. Providence has a wild, rough, incalculable road to its end, and it is of no use to try to whitewash its huge, mixed instrumentalities, or to dress up that terrific benefactor in a clean shirt and white neck-cloth of a student in divinity.<sup>1</sup>

Now this controlling purpose, including both the appeal to the understanding and that to the emotions, (should be stated, clearly, before the author begins his actual writing) in one sentence. The value of this is at once apparent: our minds tend all too much to wander from subject to subject, browsing here and there, without any really directed feeding. Now such procedure, though difficult to avoid, is nevertheless harmful to our writing. The edge of the writing is never so keen, the telling of the message, whatever it

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Fate," *The Conduct of Life*. Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers, Boston.

may be, is never so well done, until we thoroughly organize and direct all that we are to say.) In phrasing the controlling purpose in one sentence, we make just such an organization. And we have one which is most easily handled, most easily remembered, least likely to allow us to escape into empty wandering. Even in a long work this should be done, this unifying knot should be tied in the writer's mind. Those readers who rise from the last pages of a long historical work, covering several volumes and hundreds or thousands of pages, with a clear central conception of the whole work are profoundly grateful to the author. It is safe to say that such a conception could not have been given to the reader had not the writer, before he wrote a word, formulated in a few words the goal, the aim of his writing. This sentence should include the emotional appeal either as stated in a separate clause or phrase, or as expressed in the choice of words to present the facts.

The amount of machinery that seems to be required for using the controlling purpose may appear too much for practical purposes in one short lifetime. The truth is that the actual finding of the purpose will require much less time, often, than the explanation of the process here has needed. In a short theme you will often be able to scan the subject itself, to estimate your own reaction to the subject, and to determine upon your reader with remarkable quickness. More frequently you will find difficulty in determining the emotional quality of the material and your desires. But a little practice will enable you to do the preliminary thinking with rapidity and comfort. But if your subject is difficult, and if the effect is of great importance, by no means allow yourself to be swerved from determination to find the real object which you are seeking, but even at the expense of time and trouble state the center of your intentions as related to the subject, yourself, and your reader.

### Practical Use of the Controlling Purpose

We have yet to answer the practical question: when I sit down to write, of just what value will the controlling purpose be to me in the actual task of expressing my ideas? How can it really serve me in my writing? The answer is clear: the controlling purpose is of the utmost strategic value in helping to select and arrange material for attack upon the objective, which is the effect to be created in the reader's mind. Now the best strategy always combines the line of greatest advantage to the writer, the line of least resistance from the reader, and the necessities of the subject. In other words, what point can I attack easiest, where is my opponent weakest, what demands of the ground — gullies, hills, swamps, etc. — must I allow for? Sometimes these three are more or less mutually antagonistic; sometimes they unite with the greatest helpfulness, as we shall see.

### *Selection of Material*

The first question is, What, and how many, forces shall I choose for the attack? Remember, we do not now merely attack in general, wherever we find an enemy. Instead, we decide that our objective is, perhaps, a hill ten miles across the enemy's frontier. The taking of that hill is our controlling purpose. It would be easiest for us to use several regiments of fresh young troops. But the terrain is strewn with gullies and hillocks, with boulders and tangled timber. So we shall use two regiments of veteran troops who are accustomed to rough country, and follow these with some fresh youngsters who are endowed with sense and a desire to outdo the veterans. Since the enemy has a strong battery, we shall use heavy artillery. And since the enemy lacks machine guns, we shall use many of them and catch him where he is weak and may be terrified. We could easily send thirty

camp kitchens to the fighting lines, but strategy demands that they be kept back.

In exactly the same way Mr. Burroughs plans the essay which follows this discussion. His controlling purpose is obviously to make the reader understand the process of bee-hunting in such a way as to be attracted to it as a delightful sport. The nature of the subject demands that the several steps in the process be explained. Well, that suits Mr. Burroughs, because he knows these steps. The easiest method for him is to narrate his own experiences. Of course he could investigate the authorities on bee-hunting, and write a treatise, but that would be more difficult, and moreover, it would not meet the line of least resistance from the reader. To be successful, the essay must overcome the reader's inertia and (make him feel that he is actually sharing in things that he enjoys.) The selection is thus determined. From his personal experience, as giving the writer the greatest advantage, Mr. Burroughs chooses. He selects details about the beauty of nature because a reader would prefer to have fine surroundings. He mentions traits of the bee that are interesting or necessary to know. He narrates two special experiences of his own for added attractiveness. And all the while, lest inertia raise its head, he lures the reader with the glimpses of pails full of rich golden honey. In other words, keeping his eye for his controlling purpose, Mr. Burroughs can easily select the things that will accomplish that purpose to his own greatest advantage, the reader's greatest ease, and according to the demands of the subject.

You do not find in the essay a discussion of the lucrative value of bees, nor of the complicated life of the hive, nor of the present standing of the science of bee-keeping. These topics, however interesting, are not useful to the controlling purpose. The standard is, not connection, but usefulness. "Any road," says Carlyle, "this simple Entepfuhl road, will lead you to the end of the world," and if you follow mere

connection with your subjects, you will find yourself at the end of the world. The practical helpfulness of the controlling purpose is seen when you ask yourself the question, "Does the matter that I am putting in this paragraph, this sentence, actually advance my reader in thought or emotion or both, nearer the point to which I wish to lead him?" Thus the question of selection is answered.

### *The Ordering of the Material*

If we could have our own sweet will in attacking the hill ten miles beyond the border, we should ask the enemy to stack his arms, and then, with trumpet and drum and flag we should sweep in and take possession. But our sweet will must give way to necessity. Since unscalable crags lie ahead, we shall have to go round to the rear of the hill. Since we must cross a swamp, engineers must precede and build a road. Though we should like to crawl up a wide valley on the other side, we must choose a smaller one, because the enemy could wither us away in the larger one. And, to trick the enemy, we shall perhaps open fire far off on the left, while we are stealing out to the right, and thus we may take him off his guard. Our purpose of securing that hill makes these things necessary.

Similarly, in writing, we may sometimes employ the order of greatest advantage, but more often we must modify this order to meet the requirements of the subject and to rouse the least resistance from the reader. In Stevenson's essay, "Pulvis et Umbra," part of which follows the essay by Mr. Burroughs, the author used the method of greatest advantage. His object is to thrill the reader at the thought that mankind constantly strives in spite of all his failures. Several orders are possible: he could treat of the striving alone, neglecting the failure; he could treat the striving first and then the failure, or vice versa, and so on. He saw that he would gain his purpose best if he treated failure first, until he had

fairly overwhelmed the reader, and then suddenly shifted and showed that in spite of all this failure man still strives. He had to run the risk of offending the reader at the beginning by his insistence upon failure, and thus rousing the reader's possible great resistance. For we do not like to read unpleasant things. But he took the chance, knowing that if, by skillful use of words he could persuade the reader through the first part, he could easily thrill him with the reaction. For it makes a great difference whether we say, "In spite of striving, man always fails," or "In spite of failure, man always strives." The selection from the essay which appears here is taken from the middle. It is interesting to note that the first two sentences of the essay read: "We look for some reward of our endeavors and are disappointed; not success, not happiness, not even peace of conscience, crowns our ineffectual efforts to do well. Our frailties are invincible, our virtues barren; the battle goes sore against us to the going down of the sun." And the words of the final sentence of the essay are: "Let it be enough for faith, that the whole creation groans in mortal frailty, strives with unconquerable constancy: surely not all in vain."

In the essay by Mr. Burroughs the author's advantage and the reader's acquiescence largely coincide, so that the author can at once begin with remarks about the attractiveness of the hunt, the delights of its successful conclusion. To discuss at once the possibility of being stung would have been unwise, because unpleasant, and the controlling purpose of the essay is to attract. Later, this topic can safely be tucked in.

Mr. Wilson's war messages showed a combination of the lines of greatest advantage and of least resistance with the nature of the historical events. These messages began with a series of facts which, obviously true, would rouse no resistance and would at the same time insert some resentment against Germany, the very thing that the author wished to

do. Then they followed the strict chronological order, as if the author were pursuing a course already mapped for him — which, of course, he was not doing. With the controlling purpose of showing that America's entrance into the war was occasioned entirely by Germany's actions, he then proceeded to base the proposals of the messages upon the very facts that the readers had already accepted in accordance with his ultimate point of view. Such skillful manipulation deserved the success that the messages met.

All three of these examples gain their point, their objective. They do this largely because the authors knew exactly what they wished to do, what their controlling purposes were, and then marshaled their material so as to accomplish this end. Some of the topics that are subordinated, such, for example, as the possibility of being stung, are as important as others which are magnified, such as the beauty of nature — that is, they are as important in an impersonal way. As soon as the controlling purpose is known, however, they immediately become dangerous unless so placed as to bring the reader nearer the goal and not to push him from it. The point is that knowing the controlling purpose, that is, having thought out beforehand exactly what you wish to do with subject and reader, you are at once aware of both helps and obstacles, and can make use of the one, avoid the other.

Thus you will consider both the reader's ease and his prejudices. If you are to write of abstruse matters, of some question in philosophy or ethics or religion, in order to carry your reader with you you will begin with things that he can understand, and thus pave a highway into the misty lands where you desire to take him. Failure of some eminent philosophers to receive recognition has been due to their lack of a comprehensive controlling purpose, to their restricting attention to the subject alone regardless of the reader. In setting forth the principle of the machinery that digs tunnels under rivers Mr. Brooks in *The Web-foot Engineer* first

shows how a boy digs a tunnel into a sand bank, and then proceeds, with the reader's understanding assured, to the more complex but still similar operation under the river. In explaining inductive reasoning, with the controlling purpose of making it seem both frequent and natural, Huxley showed first how we reason practically about the nature of apples in a basket at the grocer's. The reader's resistance is thus avoided and the writer's advantage is increased.

A shrewd controlling purpose also makes allowance for the reader's prejudices. You ought to take as much care to cajole your reader into following you as the cook does to make us happy to the final morsel. After ices and cakes and coffee a roast or a soup is positively offensive; the cook wisely wins the battle of the spit and the dripping pan while the epicure is still receptive. So, if you are to explain democracy in a state where the recall of judges is practiced to an aristocrat who distrusts the "common herd" and is easily ruffled, you will do well to preface discussion of this recall with words about the general excellence of life in the state and then, when your reader is in a mood of acceptance, pass to the possibly offensive topic. Without knowing just what you wish to accomplish, you are likely to write in what may seem a dogged, defiant mood that intends to strike right and left, hoping to wallow through to victory.

If between us and the enemy's fort is a stream which needs pontoons for crossing, and we blindly start out marching up toward victory with no pontoons, we shall perhaps sail away to sea, but shall also probably not win the fort. If we insist upon keeping our platoon as rigidly straight, even while we climb hills through the woods, as ever a line was kept at West Point, we shall come to grief. So, if the logic of the subject has imperious demands, the controlling purpose must make count of them. William James in his essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War," saw that before a reader could

understand how civic work could be a moral equivalent, he must see what the morality of war is. The subject demands this. In an account of the United States Government it might be logically necessary to state and explain first the theory of checks and balances before the relations of executive, legislative, and judicial branches could be properly estimated. Wisely chosen, the controlling purpose of such an account would make this fact at once evident.

Constantly keeping in mind, in planning and composing an article, what the objective is, makes even the individual paragraphs and sentences more successful.) If you will examine the paragraphs in "Pulvis et Umbra," you will observe, pretty uniformly, at the beginning and end of each, a strong statement of the message of the paragraph, sentences of high emotional value. Each paragraph definitely advances the cause of the controlling purpose. Even the sentences — an example of a sentence uncontrolled occurs in Mr. Hamlin Garland's book, *A Son of the Middle Border*: "It stood on the bank of a wide river and had all the value of a seaport to me, for in summer-time great hoarsely bellowing steam-boats came and went from its quay, and all about it rose high wooded hills." The final item about the hills is in no way necessary, does not even help to give the feeling of a seaport, which more often than not lacks high hills. A sentence from Stevenson is in contrast: "The sun upon my shoulders warmed me to the heart, and I stooped forward and plunged into the sea." In this sentence facts, rhythm, even the sound of the words drive in one direction.

Without being too dogmatic — for every problem in writing is new and not infrequently a law to itself — you may be sure that if you have a definite controlling purpose, and know well what it is, you will be more likely to attain success with subject and with reader when you come to the ordering of your material.

Finally, since strategy suggests that we attack the weak-

est places in the enemy's defense, we shall do well, unless the logic of the subject or the reader's prejudice demand otherwise, to make our strongest blows when the enemy, the reader, is least prepared, that is, at the beginning and the end. Success in writing depends so much upon the freshness of the reader's mind, that an *attaque brusque* at first to insert important things, and a strong reinforcement at the end, when the reader is pricking up his ears at the coming final period, form a wise strategy. If, in order to understand one point, another is necessary, or to avoid irritation, a roundabout method is advisable, the path is plain. When these accidents do not obtain, the reader's understanding will be most easily won at the beginning and the end. At these points you must see to it that the reader is guided, with the first word, toward the emotional tone that your controlling purpose demands, and toward some important idea that bolsters this purpose, even if, as we have seen Stevenson do, you seem to be at first flying away from the purpose which we later discover. Thus Mr. Taft, in an article entitled "Present Relations of the Learned Professions to Political Government," places the ministry at the beginning and the law at the end. His controlling purpose is to make the reader believe that every profession offers large chance for the conscientious man to be of use to the political government. Consequently he chooses the two that he thinks most important, and of these places the less important at the beginning and the more important at the end. In this way he succeeds at once in turning the reader as he wishes, and leaves him also with the strongest possible bias toward belief. And since these two professions offer the greatest chance for victory for his controlling purpose, he gives them much more space than to the others, almost three times as much to law, for instance, as to teaching.

Moreover, since the emotions are affected in much writing, the skilled strategist will instantly bear in mind just what

emotion he wishes to rouse, and will see that the ideas of greater moving value receive larger development.) Mr. Burroughs gives much more space to the sections that deal with the excitement and the joy of bee-hunting than to those that deal with the less pleasant side. To the difficulty of detecting the flight of a bee he gives the single sentence: "Sometimes one's head will swim following it, and often one's eyes are put out by the sun." To the interesting actions of the bee when it is caught he gives at least ten times as much space. In this way he guides the reader's emotions in the way he wishes them to go — and makes successful writing.

The chief strategic problem in exposition, then, is that of choosing and arranging the material that the point of the writing is made with the proper emphasis. For the accomplishment of this purpose the writer must be able to answer the question, "*What do I wish to do in this piece of writing?*" Then he must bring all the material and its expression to bear upon the reader's mind so that the desired end may be inevitable. To determine what his purpose is the writer must consult the subject itself, his own personality, and the reader. He must also bear in mind the reader's intellect and his emotions. And he must unify the approach to both intellect and emotions. The firmly held conception of what his purpose is will determine what material he is to choose — what is useful and what is not — and also how to arrange this material and how to proportion the space that different sections shall have. He will arrange the material for the greatest advantage to himself and the least resistance from the reader. In other words, to make his writing successful in the sense of accomplishing its end, the writer must, before he sets down a single word, decide upon what his controlling purpose is to be and just how he intends to make material and expression — even in the individual sentence — unite to drive in the one direction of that controlling purpose.

AN IDYL OF THE HONEY-BEE<sup>1</sup>*John Burroughs*

One looks upon the woods with a new interest when he suspects they hold a colony of bees. What a pleasing secret it is; a tree with a heart of comb-honey, a decayed oak or maple with a bit of Sicily or Mount Hymettus stowed away in its trunk or branches; secret chambers where lies hidden the wealth of ten thousand little free-booters, great nuggets and wedges of precious ore gathered with risk and labor from every field and wood about.

But if you would know the delights of bee-hunting, and how many sweets such a trip yields beside honey, come with me some bright, warm, late September or early October day. It is the golden season of the year, and any errand or pursuit that takes us abroad upon the hills or by the painted woods and along the amber colored streams at such a time is enough. So, with haversacks filled with grapes and peaches and apples and a bottle of milk, — for we shall not be home to dinner, — and armed with a compass, a hatchet, a pail, and a box with a piece of comb-honey neatly fitted into it — any box the size of your hand with a lid will do nearly as well as the elaborate and ingenious contrivance of the regular bee-hunter — we sally forth. Our course at first lies along the highway, under great chestnut-trees whose nuts are just dropping, then through an orchard and across a little creek, thence gently rising through a long series of cultivated fields toward some high, uplying land, behind which rises a rugged wooded ridge or mountain, the most sightly point in all this section. Behind this ridge for several miles the country is wild, wooded, and rocky, and is no doubt the home of many wild swarms of bees.

After a refreshing walk of a couple of miles we reach a point where we will make our first trial — a high stone wall that runs parallel with the wooded ridge referred to, and separated from it by a broad field. There are bees at work there on that goldenrod, and it requires but little manoeuvring to sweep one into our box. Almost any other creature rudely and suddenly arrested in its career and clapped into a cage in this way would show great confusion and alarm. The bee is alarmed for a moment, but the bee has a pas-

<sup>1</sup> John Burroughs: *Pepacton*. Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers, Boston.

sion stronger than its love of life or fear of death, namely, desire for honey, not simply to eat, but to carry home as booty. "Such rage of honey in their bosom beats," says Virgil. It is quick to catch the scent of honey in the box, and as quick to fall to filling itself. We now set the box down upon the wall and gently remove the cover. The bee is head and shoulders in one of the half-filled cells, and is oblivious to everything else about it. Come rack, come ruin, it will die at work. We step back a few paces, and sit down upon the ground so as to bring the box against the blue sky as a background. In two or three minutes the bee is seen rising slowly and heavily from the box. It seems loath to leave so much honey behind and it marks the place well. It mounts aloft in a rapidly increasing spiral, surveying the near and minute objects first, then the larger and more distant, till having circled about the spot five or six times and taken all its bearings it darts away for home. It is a good eye that holds fast to the bee till it is fairly off. Sometimes one's head will swim following it, and often one's eyes are put out by the sun. This bee gradually drifts down the hill, then strikes away toward a farm-house half a mile away, where I know bees are kept. Then we try another and another, and the third bee, much to our satisfaction, goes straight toward the woods. We could see the brown speck against the darker background for many yards.

A bee will usually make three or four trips from the hunter's box before it brings back a companion. I suspect the bee does not tell its fellows what it has found, but that they smell out the secret; it doubtless bears some evidence with it upon its feet or proboscis that it has been upon honey-comb and not upon flowers, and its companions take the hint and follow, arriving always many seconds behind. Then the quantity and quality of the booty would also betray it. No doubt, also, there are plenty of gossips about a hive that note and tell everything. "Oh, did you see that? Peggy Mel came in a few moments ago in great haste, and one of the up-stairs packers says she was loaded till she groaned with apple-blossom honey which she deposited, and then rushed off again like mad. Apple blossom honey in October! Fee, fi, fo, fum! I smell something! Let's after."

"In about half an hour we have three well-defined lines of bees established — two to farm-houses and one to the woods, and our

box is being rapidly depleted of its honey. About every fourth bee goes to the woods, and now that they have learned the way thoroughly they do not make the long preliminary whirl above the box, but start directly from it. The woods are rough and dense and the hill steep, and we do not like to follow the line of bees until we have tried at least to settle the problem as to the distance they go into the woods — whether the tree is on this side of the ridge or in the depth of the forest on the other side. So we shut up the box when it is full of bees and carry it about three hundred yards along the wall from which we are operating. When liberated, the bees, as they always will in such cases, go off in the same directions they have been going; they do not seem to know that they have been moved. But other bees have followed our scent, and it is not many minutes before a second line to the woods is established. This is called cross-lining the bees. The new line makes a sharp angle with the other line, and we know at once that the tree is only a few rods into the woods. The two lines we have established form two sides of a triangle of which the wall is the base; at the apex of the triangle, or where the two lines meet in the woods, we are sure to find the trees. We quickly follow up these lines, and where they cross each other on the side of the hill we scan every tree closely. I pause at the foot of an oak and examine a hole near the root; now the bees are in this tree and their entrance is on the upper side near the ground, not two feet from the hole I peer into, and yet so quiet and secret is their going and coming that I fail to discover them and pass on up the hill. Failing in this direction, I return to the oak again, and then perceive the bees going out in a small crack in the tree. The bees do not know they are found out and that the game is in our hands, and are as oblivious of our presence as if we were ants or crickets. The indications are that the swarm is a small one, and the store of honey trifling. In "taking up" a bee-tree it is usual first to kill or stupefy the bees with the fumes of burning sulphur or with tobacco smoke. But this course is impracticable on the present occasion, so we boldly and ruthlessly assault the tree with an axe we have procured. At the first blow the bees set up a loud buzzing, but we have no mercy, and the side of the cavity is soon cut away and the interior with its white-yellow mass of comb-honey is exposed, and not a bee strikes a blow in de-

fense of its all. This may seem singular, but it has nearly always been my experience. When a swarm of bees are thus rudely assaulted with an axe, they evidently think the end of the world has come, and, like true misers as they are, each one seizes as much of the treasure as it can hold; in other words, they all fall to and gorge themselves with honey, and calmly await the issue. When in this condition they make no defense and will not sting unless taken hold of. In fact they are as harmless as flies. Bees are always to be managed with boldness and decision.

Any halfway measures, any timid poking about, any feeble attempts to reach their honey, are sure to be quickly resented. The popular notion that bees have a special antipathy toward certain persons and a liking for certain others has only this fact at the bottom of it; they will sting a person who is afraid of them and goes skulking and dodging about, and they will not sting a person who faces them boldly and has no dread of them. They are like dogs. The way to disarm a vicious dog is to show him you do not fear him; it is his turn to be afraid then. I never had any dread of bees and am seldom stung by them. I have climbed up into a large chestnut that contained a swarm in one of its cavities and chopped them out with an axe, being obliged at times to pause and brush the bewildered bees from my hands and face, and not been stung once. I have chopped a swarm out of an apple-tree in June and taken out the cards of honey and arranged them in a hive, and then dipped out the bees with a dipper, and taken the whole home with me in pretty good condition, with scarcely any opposition on the part of the bees. In reaching your hand into the cavity to detach and remove the comb you are pretty sure to get stung, for when you touch the "business end" of a bee, it will sting even though its head be off. But the bee carries the antidote to its own poison. The best remedy for bee sting is honey, and when your hands are besmeared with honey, as they are sure to be on such occasions, the wound is scarcely more painful than the prick of a pin.

When a bee-tree is thus "taken up" in the middle of the day, of course a good many bees are away from home and have not heard the news. When they return and find the ground flowing with honey, and piles of bleeding combs lying about, they apparently do not recognize the place, and their first instinct is to fall to and

fill themselves; this done, their next thought is to carry it home, so they rise up slowly through the branches of the trees till they have attained an altitude that enables them to survey the scene, when they seem to say, "Why, *this* is home" and down they come again; beholding the wreck and ruins once more they still think there is some mistake, and get up a second or a third time and then drop back pitifully as before. It is the most pathetic sight of all, the surviving and bewildered bees struggling to save a few drops of their wasted treasures.

Presently, if there is another swarm in the woods, robber-bees appear. You may know them by their saucy, chiding, devil-may-care hum. It is an ill-wind that blows nobody good, and they make the most of the misfortune of their neighbors; and thereby pave the way for their own ruin. The hunter marks their course and the next day looks them up. On this occasion the day was hot and the honey very fragrant, and a line of bees was soon established S.S.W. Though there was much refuse honey in the old stub, and though little golden rills trickled down the hill from it, and the near branches and saplings were besmeared with it where we wiped our murderous hands, yet not a drop was wasted. It was a feast to which not only honey-bees came, but bumble-bees, wasps, hornets, flies, ants. The bumble-bees, which at this season are hungry vagrants with no fixed place of abode, would gorge themselves, then creep beneath the bits of empty comb or fragment of bark and pass the night, and renew the feast next day. The bumble-bee is an insect of which the bee-hunter sees much. There are all sorts and sizes of them. They are dull and clumsy compared with the honey-bee. Attracted in the fields by the bee-hunter's box, they will come up the wind on the scent and blunder into it in the most stupid, lubberly fashion.

The honey-bee that licked up our leavings on the old stub belonged to a swarm, as it proved, about half a mile farther down the ridge, and a few days afterward fate overtook them, and their stores in turn became the prey of another swarm in the vicinity, which also tempted Providence and were overwhelmed. The first mentioned swarm I had lined from several points, and was following up the clue over rocks and through gulleys, when I came to where a large hemlock had been felled a few years before and a

swarm taken from a cavity near the top of it; fragments of the old comb were yet to be seen. A few yards away stood another short, squatly hemlock, and I said my bees ought to be there. As I paused near it I noticed where the tree had been wounded with an axe a couple of feet from the ground many years before. The wound had partially grown over, but there was an opening there that I did not see at the first glance. I was about to pass on when a bee passed me making that peculiar shrill, discordant hum that a bee makes when besmeared with honey. I saw it alight in the partially closed wound and crawl home; then came others and others, little bands and squads of them heavily freighted with honey from the box. The tree was about twenty inches through and hollow at the butt, or from the axe mark down. This space the bees had completely filled with honey. With an axe we cut away the outer ring of live wood and exposed the treasure. Despite the utmost care, we wounded the comb so that little rills of the golden liquid issued from the root of the tree and trickled down the hill.

The other bee-tree in the vicinity, to which I have referred, we found one warm November day in less than half an hour after entering the woods. It also was a hemlock, that stood in a niche in a wall of hoary, moss-covered rocks thirty feet high. The tree hardly reached to the top of the precipice. The bees entered a small hole at the root, which was seven or eight feet from the ground. The position was a striking one. Never did apiary have a finer outlook or more rugged surroundings. A black, wood-embraced lake lay at our feet; the long panorama of the Catskills filled the far distance, and the more broken outlines of the Shawangunk range filled the near. On every hand were precipices and a wild confusion of rocks and trees.

The cavity occupied by the bees was about three feet and a half long and eight or ten inches in diameter. With an axe we cut away one side of the tree and laid bare its curiously wrought heart of honey. It was a most pleasing sight. What winding and devious ways the bees had through their palace! What great masses and blocks of snow-white comb there were! Where it was sealed up, presenting that slightly dented, uneven surface, it looked like some precious ore. When we carried a large pail of it out of the woods, it seemed still more like ore.

In lining bees through the woods, the tactics of the hunter are to pause every twenty or thirty rods, lop away the branches or cut down the trees, and set the bees to work again. If they still go forward, he goes forward also and repeats his observations till the tree is found or till the bees turn and come back upon the trail. Then he knows he has passed the tree, and he retraces his steps to a convenient distance and tries again, and thus quickly reduces the space to be looked over till the swarm is traced home. On one occasion, in a wild rocky wood, where the surface alternated between deep gulfs and chasms filled with thick, heavy growths of timber and sharp, precipitous, rocky ridges like a tempest-tossed sea, I carried my bees directly under their tree, and set them to work from a high, exposed ledge of rocks not thirty feet distant. One would have expected them under such circumstances to have gone straight home, as there were but few branches intervening, but they did not; they labored up through the trees and attained an altitude above the woods as if they had miles to travel, and thus baffled me for hours. Bees will always do this. They are acquainted with the woods only from the top side, and from the air above; they recognize home only by landmarks here, and in every instance they rise aloft to take their bearings. Think how familiar to them the topography of the forest summits must be — an umbrageous sea or plain where every mark and point is known.

Another curious fact is that generally you will get track of a bee-tree sooner when you are half a mile from it than when you are only a few yards. Bees, like us human insects, have little faith in the near at hand; they expect to make their fortune in a distant field, they are lured by the remote and the difficult, and hence overlook the flower and the sweet at their very door. On several occasions I have unwittingly set my box within a few paces of a bee-tree and waited long for bees without getting them, when, on removing to a distant field or opening in the woods I have got a clue at once.

Bees, like the milkman, like to be near a spring. They do water their honey, especially in a dry time. The liquid is then of course thicker and sweeter, and will bear diluting. Hence, old bee-hunters look for bee-trees along creeks and near spring runs in the woods. I once found a tree a long distance from any water,

and the honey had a peculiar bitter flavor imparted to it, I was convinced, by rain water sucked from the decayed and spongy hemlock tree, in which the swarm was found. In cutting into the tree, the north side of it was found to be saturated with water like a spring, which ran out in big drops, and had a bitter flavor. The bees had thus found a spring or a cistern in their own house.

Wild honey is as near like tame as wild bees are like their brothers in the hive. The only difference is that wild honey is flavored with your adventure, which makes it a little more delectable than the domestic article.

### PULVIS ET UMBRA<sup>1</sup>

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

What a monstrous specter is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like grass, fitted with eyes that move and glitter in his face; a thing to set children screaming; — and yet looked at nearer, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues, infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the deity; rising up to do battle for an egg or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy: the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbor, to his God; an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame, below which, if it be possible,

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Stevenson: *Across the Plains*. Copyright, 1892, by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City.

he will not stoop. The design in most men is one of conformity; here and there, in picked natures, it transcends itself and soars on the other side, arming martyrs with independence; but in all, in their degrees, it is a bosom thought. It sways with so complete an empire that merely selfish things come second, even with the selfish: that appetites are starved, fears are conquered, pains supported; that almost the dullest shrinks from the reproof of a glance, although it were a child's; and all but the most cowardly stand amidst the risks of war; and the more noble, having strongly conceived an act as due to their ideal, affront and embrace death. Strange enough if, with their singular origin and perverted practice, they think they are to be rewarded in some future life: stranger still, if they are persuaded of the contrary, and think this blow, which they solicit, will strike them senseless for eternity. I shall be reminded what a tragedy of misconception and misconduct man at large presents: of organized injustice, cowardly violence, and treacherous crime; and of the damning imperfections of the best. They cannot be too darkly drawn. Man is indeed marked for failure in his efforts to do right. But where the best consistently miscarry, how tenfold more remarkable that all should continue to strive; and surely we should find it both touching and inspiriting, that in a field from which success is banished, our race should not cease to labor.

If the first view of this creature, stalking in his rotatory isle, be a thing to shake the courage of the stoutest, on this nearer sight he startles us with an admiring wonder. It matters not where we look, under what climate we observe him, in what stage of society, in what depth of ignorance, burthened with what erroneous morality; by campfires in Assiniboia, the snow powdering his shoulders, the wind plucking his blanket, as he sits, passing the ceremonial calumet and uttering his grave opinions like a Roman senator; in ships at sea, a man inured to hardship and vile pleasures, his brightest hope a fiddle in a tavern and a bedizened trull who sells herself to rob him, and he for all that simple, innocent, cheerful, kindly like a child, constant to toil, brave to drown, for others; in the slums of cities, moving among indifferent millions to mechanical employments, without hope of change in the future, with scarce a pleasure in the present, and yet true to his virtues, honest up to

his lights, kind to his neighbors, tempted perhaps in vain by the bright gin-palace, perhaps long-suffering with the drunken wife that ruins him; in India (a woman this time) kneeling with broken cries and streaming tears as she drowns her child in the sacred river; in the brothel, the discard of society, living mainly on strong drink, fed with affronts, a fool, a thief, the comrade of thieves, and even here keeping the point of honor and the touch of pity, often repaying the world's scorn with service, often standing firm upon a scruple, and at a certain cost, rejecting riches: everywhere some virtue cherished or affected, everywhere some decency of thought and carriage, everywhere the ensign of man's ineffectual goodness: — ah! if I could show you this! if I could show you these men and women, all the world over, in every stage of history, under every abuse of error, under every circumstance of failure, without hope, without help, without thanks, still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honor, the poor jewel of their souls!

## OUTLINES

### The Value of Outlines

It has been thought that the old Scotchman who said, "A man's years are three score and ten, or maybe by good hap he'll get ten more, but *it's a weary wrastle all the way through!*" came to his final words as the result of writing outlines. If this be true, surely it is unfortunate, for the writing of outlines brings exceeding great reward. An outline is not an ancient form of blind discipline, but rather a helping hand across the bogland of facts and ideas. It is a most useful instrument toward good writing; its justification is its practical usefulness. This usefulness, helpfulness, is double in its value — to the writer and to the instructor, when there is one.

As to the value of an outline for the writer — without an outline you face in your writing a complicated problem, more complicated, in fact, than is justifiable. At one and the same

time you must make your thinking logical and your expression adequate — distinguished if possible. Either of these tasks is sufficient to demand all your powers; together, they offer a really overwhelming problem. Stevenson, to whom style was of the greatest importance, as bone of the bone and blood of the blood of the writing, wrote to a friend, "Problems of style are (as yet) dirt under my feet; my problem is architectural, creative — to get this stuff joined and moving." It was only after he had fitted his material together that he felt able to devote himself to making the beautiful prose that is so much admired. [A noted Frenchman is quoted as exclaiming, when first he beheld the famous Brooklyn Bridge, "How beautiful it is!", then, "How well made it is!" and finally, after a moment's reflection, "How well planned it is!" A good piece of writing should have the same comments made; but they cannot be made, usually, without the carefully planned outline.]

You face the problem, without an outline, of answering the two questions about every detail that presents itself for treatment: first, shall I include or exclude this detail; and secondly, how shall I make this detail help the general flow of my writing, and how shall I express it so that it shall contribute to the proper tone of the work? And while you thus judge each small detail, you must also keep your critical faculties active to estimate your total course, whether you are cleaving your way clearly, steadily, and with sufficient directness to your goal, whether the work as a whole is answering your desires.

Now to ask the unaided brain, unless it has had long years of training, to perform all this critical work during the actual process of expression, is nothing short of cruel — and almost sure of failure. For in any writing which enlists from you even a spark of interest the fervor of creative work, the stimulating effect of seeing the work grow under your pen, tends often to unseat the critical powers, to destroy per-

spective, to make a detail seem more valuable or less valuable than it should, on the whim of the momentary interest or repulsion. Thus the logic of the writing is impaired, for details are included which should not enter, and others are excluded which ought to be welcomed, and proportions are bad. And the expression is so liable to unevenness as to be less worthy than it should be. Bad logic and uneven expression beget failure.

The outline helps to overcome these difficulties. In the first place, it is not final, can be changed at will, and makes no extraordinary demands on the powers of expression. In the second place, as regards logic, the outline shows the relation of ideas to each other and to the whole subject; you can estimate rather easily whether a detail is of sufficient value to warrant inclusion, and, if so, how much space it deserves. For in the outline you have the bare fact, succinctly expressed, which enables you to focus your attention upon the thought. But since logic is more than mere inclusion and order and spacing, and deals also with the logic of attitude, the outline is again of service. For it shows what should be the tone of the complete piece of writing, and how this tone should be modified by the individual section of the writing. Suppose that you are to write of the attitude of a politician toward party principles. If a heading in your outline reads, "He never feared to modify principles to meet inevitable conditions," the attitude which you take in writing will be radically different from that which you would assume if the heading read, "He never hesitated to warp principles to outwit unfavorable conditions." Both the logic of structure and that of attitude, then, are aided by the use of an outline. And, at any point in the actual completed writing, you can easily determine by referring to the outline, whether you are gaining the effect that you desire and what progress you have made. And in the third place, as regards expression, the outline relieves you of the

necessity of doing the constructive thinking of the subject, and enables you to apply all your powers to the actual saying of your message. Shakespeare might have written, instead of "the multitudinous seas incarnadine," "make all the ocean, that's full of fishes,<sup>1</sup> look red" — but he did not. Had he done so, where would now have been the power and the charm? Expression is of utmost value, and you can ill afford to slight it. For this reason, and especially since distinguished expression is so difficult to form, to be released from the attendant worry of constructive thinking is of the greatest help to the writer. Both logic and expression, then, are dependent on the outline) with it they are more sure.

Instead, then, of feeling that dim dread of failure, which ever dogs the writer's steps, with a well-constructed outline you can feel comparative safety in the possession of a safe guide in case of perplexity. You will be initiated, will know the secrets of your subject, will have a "grip" with your facts and ideas, and can apply your powers to putting the intangible thoughts into tangible words.

As for being of value to the instructor, often he too can estimate more surely and easily the worth of the writing if he has the skeleton to examine. For there the structural defects are more apparent, are not concealed by the pleasant flow of words, just as the structure of a skyscraper is more apparent before the wall-tiles or bricks are laid on to conceal the girders. The instructor can therefore often point out insufficiencies in the thought, or wrong relations, which might otherwise stand as defects in the finished work.

### The Form of the Outline

Shall an outline be written in words and phrases or in complete sentences? In the first place, so far as any reader except the author is concerned, complete sentences are neces-

<sup>1</sup> If this be the meaning of "multitudinous."

sary for understanding. Often they are necessary for the writer himself. In an outline of a theme explaining gas engines the isolated heading *Speed* means nothing definite to any one but the author, if indeed to him. A reader cannot tell from such a word whether speed is important or insignificant, or whether the author intends to give to gas engines credit for comparative excellence in this property. If, however, the heading reads, "In the important property of *Speed* gas engines are the equal of steam engines," the reader knows at once what is meant, whether he may agree with the statement or not. He can definitely tell from an outline of complete sentences what the course of thought is to be and what will be the tone of the theme. The reader, then, needs complete sentences. The writer, on the other hand, might seem to be sufficiently helped by mere words or phrases, since he naturally knows what he means. But does he know? The chances are that when an author puts down such a heading as *Speed* he has only a large general notion of what he means, without being sure of the immediate connection and application, and with perhaps no idea at all of the tone which he intends to catch. If the author will write the sentence quoted above, he will complete his thought, make it really definite, and be pretty sure to know what he is talking about, what he intends to do. Furthermore, even though he know, when he sets down a phrase, what he means by it, the chance is strong that when he arrives at the expansion of the phrase he will have forgotten some of the implications and may give the heading a cast that he did not intend. Whether he knows definitely what he means or not, the writer is more safe if he uses complete sentences, and for any other reader of the outline complete sentences are quite necessary.

(Outlines are of three kinds: those that show the topic relations by division into indented headings; those that show the sequence of paragraphs by statement of the topic sen-

tence; and those that combine these two forms. The primary object of the first form, which is illustrated by the first outline of "An Idyl of the Honey-Bee" which follows, is to aid in the thinking, to plot out the ground and to group the material. In this first outline a glance at the five main headings makes the plan of the essay at once apparent — first a statement of the effect of bees upon us; then an account of a hunt; then some specific examples to drive things home; then some special directions that might be overlooked, and finally a tribute to the joy of the hunting. The benefit of this kind of outline is that the general relationships among topics are made clear, the large divisions of thought appear, and the writer can with comparative ease tell whether he has covered the subject, and whether he has chosen the best order of thought. It avoids the invertebrate flow of thought that is unaware of structure. In other words, it is of value chiefly to the thinking. It does not show which topics shall be grouped into paragraphs together, and it does not, of course, phrase the topic sentences, usually. In such an outline care should be taken to make each heading a complete sentence, and to make headings that are of the same rank fairly parallel in structure of expression unless this interferes with the tone of the heading. For example, A, B, and C under III are made similar in structure since they bear the same general relation to III.

The second type of outline, that in which a list of the topic sentences is given, and which is illustrated by the second outline of "An Idyl of the Honey-Bee" which follows, is of value, especially if used with an outline of the first type, in that it shows just how much of the thought should go into the various paragraphs, and thereby establishes the divisions of expression. Comparison of the two outlines of "An Idyl of the Honey-Bee" will show that paragraph 5 in the second outline includes all the material in the four headings, 2, a, 1', and b, under II in the first outline. Now

for the writer to know beforehand how he intends to divide his material into paragraphs is of great value; otherwise he might be giving to some comparatively minor point — which for the moment assumes interest for him — a separate paragraph, as if, for example, Mr. Burroughs had dwelt at length on the interesting location of trees on ledges. In other words, this second kind of outline is valuable chiefly in its arrangement and placing of material. Its service in making the original choice is not so immediately apparent. It has also the advantage that it indicates pretty well what kind of expression is to be used in the expanded form.

The third type of outline, which many writers prefer to either of the others, indicates both the topics to be treated and the division into paragraphs. It may be constructed in either of two ways: first, the topic sentences may be stated in their regular order, with the subdivisions of the thought as they appear in the indented outline grouped under the topic sentences; or in the indented outline the paragraphs may be indicated by the regular sign for the paragraph at any point where a new division is to be made. That is, in the first of the two outlines that follow, the first paragraph might be indicated in the first outline as including I and I, A; the second as including II and II, A; the third as including II, B, 1, a, b, etc. Or, in the second outline the subheadings of the first might be indicated under the various topic sentences. The value of this type of outline is obviously that it both shows the logic of the thought and the divisional arrangement for presentation in paragraphs. With such an outline the chances that you could go wrong, in even a long theme on a difficult subject, are slight.

Do not fail, therefore, when your theme is to be of any considerable length, or when the subject is at all difficult, to make an outline. There is no greater pleasure in the world than that of creative effort when the creator knows what he is about. But when the ideas are hazy, when the

writer does not know exactly what he wishes to do and what impression he wishes to make — then the process of creation is anything but pleasant. And since the outline presents a pattern of your work, since with it you cannot fail to see what your intentions are and what the requirements of your subject, regard it as your best writing friend — and make use of the rights of friendship and require service.

#### FIRST OUTLINE OF "AN IDYL OF THE HONEY-BEE"

- I. A colony of bees increases our interest in a wood.
  - A. The secret of the hidden golden store of honey is pleasing.
- II. The hunt is most interesting, especially in the autumn.
  - A. Nature, as we tramp with luncheon and with bait, is in her greatest glory.
  - B. We are stimulated by the odds against our finding the tree.
    1. Determining the direction of the tree is a problem.
      - a. It is easy to catch the first bee and watch it devour the bait.
      - b. But to be sure of its rapid flight home requires sharp eyes and concentrated watching.
      - c. Only after three or four trips of the first bee do others discover the secret of our bait and join in establishing the necessary "line" to the tree.
    2. Determining the distance of the tree requires skill.
      - a. From another point we make a new "line" that meets the first at the tree.
        - 1'. This is called "cross-lining."
      - b. It is easy to pass by the tree even when we know about where it is.
    - C. Once found, the tree must be attacked boldly.
      1. Bees do not sting a bold person.
      2. But when a sting is touched, even on a dead bee, it hurts.
      3. Honey is the best cure for the sting.

**D. The actions of the bees are interesting.**

1. Those which are away from home do not recognize the ruins of their own hive, and begin to eat.
  - a. At last they pathetically understand.
2. Robber bees come for plunder.
  - a. Bumble-bees arrive in large numbers.
    - 1'. Compared with honey-bees they are clumsy.

**III. Two examples from experience show the chances for missing and the delights of triumph.**

- A. Both trees were hemlocks.
- B. Both were in interesting situations.
- C. Both yielded good store of honey.

**IV. Special facts, occasioned by the habits of bees, need to be remembered.**

- A. In the woods, the hunter must stop, every little while, to test his "line."
  1. Sometimes he is baffled, because the bees do not know the woods from the ground side.
- B. Bees hunt for honey far from home.
  1. Usually it is easier to find a tree half a mile away than from only a few yards.
- C. Since bees like water, a careful hunter looks along creeks and near springs.

**V. Wild honey is better than tame because it tastes of the adventure of finding it.****SECOND OUTLINE OF "AN IDYL OF THE HONEY-BEE"**

1. The presence of a colony of bees in a wood gives it interest.
2. The fall is the best time to start with luncheon and bait off across the fields a-hunting.
3. After two miles we catch several bees and watch them start for home with our honey.
4. After several trips, other bees that have discovered the secret arrive.
5. With one line established, we move on, establish another, find the tree and attack it.
6. Boldness in handling bees is essential.

7. Bees that are away from home when their tree is attacked have considerable difficulty in recognizing it.
8. Robber bees join the plundered to eat all the remnants of honey.
9. A neighbor honey-bee leads to another store in a hemlock.
10. Another tree in the vicinity, also a hemlock, had a superb situation.
11. The honey in this tree was most pleasing to see and to carry home.
12. In lining bees one must stop every little while and test his line; bees puzzle sometimes by their actions since they know the woods only from above.
13. Bees discover their home to the hunter better when they are caught at some distance from the tree.
14. Since bees like water, it is well to hunt along brooks and near springs.
15. Wild honey is sweeter than tame.

#### EXERCISES

- I. Select the words and phrases in the selection from *Pulvis et Umbra* which immediately help to accomplish the controlling purpose of the essay.
- II. From what grade in the intellectual and social world does Stevenson select his examples in the paragraph beginning: *If the first view of this creature, etc.*? Why? From what grade would you select examples for a similar paragraph if you intended the creation of despair as your controlling purpose? What common qualities are found in *all* Stevenson's examples through the selection? Why does he strive for this quality?
- III. Make an outline of "An Idyl of the Honey-Bee," using the material which now appears, but placing the accent of the essay upon the difficulty of obtaining the honey, instead of upon the pleasures of the hunt, as it is now placed — in other words, outline the essay with change of controlling purpose.
- IV. Write the first paragraph of the essay, and the last one, as you would wish them to appear if your intention were to make difficulty rather than joy the controlling purpose.
- V.
  1. Make an outline for "Solemn-Looking Blokes" with the controlling purpose of bringing out the romantic nature of the presence of American troops in England.
  2. Make an outline such as would suit the expression of an American who had been living in England since the declaration of war in 1914 and had been taunted with the apathy of the United

States government, and now was supremely proud to see United States troops in England.

**VI. Write a final paragraph of "Solemn-Looking Blokes" to express any of the following controlling purposes:**

1. Joy at the union of the old and the new worlds in a common cause.
2. Heartache at the awfulness of soldiers' sailing 3000 miles to die because an autocratic government precipitated war.
3. The pride of an American resident in London over the physique of the United States soldiers.
4. The astonishment of a London school-boy who has just read in his history how the American colonies rebelled.
5. The apprehension of a British Tory lest aristocracy be doomed when the troops of a great democracy appear so far away from home to battle against autocracy.

**VII. Write outlines and themes on any of the following subjects to accomplish the different controlling purposes:**

1. The Scientific Reduction of Noise.
  1. To show the *social duty* of engineers.
  2. To show the wonder of man's analytical powers.
  3. To show the seriousness of the difficulties that must be faced.
2. The Growing Appreciation of Good Architecture in America.
  1. To show the good educative work of our architects.
  2. To show the influence of European travel.
  3. To show the effect of the general rise in standards of education.
3. The Popular Magazines.
  1. To show the general looseness of thinking.
  2. To show the senseless duplication of material and ideas.
  3. To show the opportunity for a host of authors.
4. The Effects of the Big Mail-Order Houses.
  1. To show how they ruin the small country store.
  2. To show how they increase the opportunities of the small buyers.
  3. To show how they help give employment in the large cities.
5. Is Religion Declining?
  1. To show the shifting of responsibility from creeds to deeds.
  2. To show the changed status of the church.
  3. To show the effect of increased education on religion.
6. "Best Sellers."
  1. To show the relation of their immediate popularity to their final valuation.
  2. To indicate the qualities necessary to a "best seller."
  3. To show the effect upon the thinking of a nation that has many "best sellers."

7. Results of the Farm Credit Legislation.
  1. To show the relief gained for the farmers.
  2. To show the effect on increased production.
  3. To show the fairer economic distribution.
8. The Use of Concrete.
  1. To show the general economic value.
  2. To show the general lightening of toil that it may have caused.
  3. To show the variety of its service.
9. The American Spirit.
  1. To show its idealism.
  2. To show its indebtedness to England, or France, or Germany.
  3. To show how it may help the world.
10. Beethoven's Piano-forte Sonatas.
  1. To show them as the culmination of the sonata development.
  2. To show their romantic nature.
  3. To show the development of Beethoven's genius as he matured.
11. Heredity in Plants.
  1. To show the similarity to heredity in man.
  2. To show how knowledge of heredity in plants may serve an economic purpose.
  3. To show the wonderful consistency of the laws of heredity in plants.
12. Glacial Action in the Mississippi Valley.
  1. To show the economic result.
  2. To indicate the sweep of time consumed in the formation.
  3. To show the picturesque qualities in the gradual action.

VIII. What is the controlling purpose in the following selection? Point out the influence upon the writer of knowing that Bostonians would read his words. Indicate how the selection would differ if the controlling object were to be bitter jealousy expressed by a resident in a newer, larger, envious city.

Boston has a rather old-fashioned habit of speaking the English language. It came upon us rather suddenly one day as we journeyed out Huntington Avenue to the smart new gray and red opera house. The very coloring of the *foyer* of that house — soft and simple — bespoke the refinement of the Boston of to-day.

In the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, in every other one of the glib opera houses that are springing up mushroom-fashion across the land, our ears would have been assailed by "Librettos! Get your Librettos!" Not so in Boston. At the Boston Opera House the young woman back of the *foyer* stand calmly announced at clocklike intervals:

"Translations. Translations."

And the head usher, whom the older Bostonians grasped by the hand and seemed to regard as a long-lost friend, did not sip out, "Checks, please."

"Locations," he requested, as he condescended to the hand-grasps of the socially elect.

"The nearer door for those stepping out," announces the guard upon the elevated train, and as for the surface and trolley-cars, those wonderful green perambulators laden down with more signs than nine ordinary trolley-cars would carry at one time, they do not speak of the newest type in Boston as "Pay-as-you-enter-cars," after the fashion of less cultured communities. In the Hub they are known as Prepayment cars — its precision is unrelenting.<sup>1</sup>

- IX.** What is the controlling purpose in the following selection from Mr. John Masefield's volume of *Gallipoli*? Analyze this controlling purpose as to the subject itself, the author's personal reaction, and the intended readers — largely perhaps, the American people.

Let the reader imagine himself to be facing three miles of any very rough broken sloping ground known to him, ground for the most part gorse-thyme-and-scrub-covered, being poor soil, but in some places beautiful with flowers (especially a "spiked yellow flower with a whitish leaf") and on others green from cultivation. Let him say to himself that he and an army of his friends are about to advance up the slope towards the top, and that as they will be advancing in a line, along the whole length of the three miles, he will only see the advance of those comparatively near to him, since folds or dips in the ground will hide the others. Let him, before he advances, look earnestly along the line of the hill, as it shows up clear, in blazing sunlight only a mile from him, to see his tactical objective, one little clump of pines, three hundred yards away, across what seem to be fields. Let him see in the whole length of the hill no single human being, nothing but scrub, earth, a few scattered buildings, of the Levantine type (dirty white with roofs of dirty red) and some patches of dark Scotch pine, growing as the pine loves, on bleak crests. Let him imagine himself to be more weary than he has ever been in his life before, and dirtier than he has ever believed it possible to be, and parched with thirst, nervous, wild-eyed and rather lousy. Let him think that he has not slept for more than a few minutes together for eleven days and nights, and that in all his waking hours he has been fighting for his life, often hand to hand in the dark with a fierce enemy, and that after each fight he has had to dig himself a hole in the ground, often with his hands, and then walk three or four roadless miles to bring up heavy boxes under fire. Let him

<sup>1</sup> Edward Hungerford: *The Personality of American Cities*. By courtesy of the publisher, Robert M. McBride & Co., New York City.

think, too, that in all those eleven days he has never for an instant been out of the thunder of cannon, that waking or sleeping their devastating crash has been blasting the air across within a mile or two, and this from an artillery so terrible that each discharge beats as it were a wedge of shock between the skull-bone and the brain. Let him think too that never, for an instant, in all that time, has he been free or even partly free from the peril of death in its most sudden and savage forms, and that hourly in all that time he has seen his friends blown to pieces at his side, or dismembered, or drowned, or driven mad, or stabbed, or sniped by some unseen stalker, or bombed in the dark sap with a handful of dynamite in a beef-tin, till their blood is caked upon his clothes and thick upon his face, and that he knows, as he stares at the hill, that in a few moments, more of that dwindling band, already too few, God knows how many too few, for the task to be done, will be gone the same way, and that he himself may reckon that he has done with life, tasted and spoken and loved his last, and that in a few minutes more may be blasted dead, or lying bleeding in the scrub, with perhaps his face gone and a leg and an arm broken, unable to move but still alive, unable to drive away the flies or screen the ever-dropping rain, in a place where none will find him, or be able to help him, a place where he will die and rot and shrivel, till nothing is left of him but a few rags and a few remnants and a little identification-disc flapping on his bones in the wind. Then let him hear the intermittent crash and rattle of the fire augment suddenly and awfully in a roaring, blasting roll, unspeakable and unthinkable, while the air above, that has long been whining and whistling, becomes filled with the scream of shells passing like great cats of death in the air; let him see the slope of the hill vanish in a few moments into the white, yellow, and black smokes of great explosions shot with fire, and watch the lines of white puffs marking the hill in streaks where the shrapnel searches a suspected trench; and then, in the height of the tumult, when his brain is shaking in his head, let him pull himself together with his friends, and clamber up out of the trench, to go forward against an invisible enemy, safe in some unseen trench expecting him.<sup>1</sup>

What light does the following paragraph which appears at the beginning of the book throw upon the controlling purpose?

Later, when there was leisure, I began to consider the Dardanelles Campaign, not as a tragedy, nor as a mistake, but as a great human effort, which came, more than once, very near to triumph, achieved the impossible many times, and failed, in the end, as many great deeds of arms have failed, from something which had nothing to do with arms nor with the men who bore them. That

<sup>1</sup> John Masefield: *Gallipoli*. By courtesy of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, New York City.

the effort failed is not against it; much that is most splendid in military history failed, many great things and noble men have failed. To myself, this failure is the second grand event of the war; the first was Belgium's answer to the German ultimatum.<sup>1</sup>

- X.** Explain what would be your controlling purpose in a theme on any of the following subjects, and how you would *arrange your material* to accomplish this purpose.

1. What is the Primary Function of a Successful Novel?
2. The Philosophy of Woman Suffrage.
3. Lynch Law and Law Reform.
4. The Conservatism of the American College Student.
5. Intellectual Bravery.
6. A Mediæval Free City.
7. Mr. Roosevelt's Career as an Index of the American Character.
8. Practical Efficiency as an Enemy to "Sweetness and Light."
9. The *Aesthetics* of the Skyscraper.
10. Possibilities for the Small Farmer in America.
11. The Future of Civil Engineering.
12. Housekeeping as an Exact Science.

- XI.** Indicate what your controlling purpose would be in writing of the following subjects, if you chose your purpose from the *subject-matter alone*. Then show how the purpose might be affected by the different sets of readers as they are indicated in the subheadings.

1. The Intelligence of the Average Voter.
  - a. For a woman who eagerly desires woman suffrage.
  - b. For a refined but narrow aristocrat, descendant of an old family.
  - c. For an agitating member of the I.W.W.
2. The Value of Courses in Literature for the Technical Student.
  - a. For a hard-headed civil engineer.
  - b. For a white-haired, kindly old professor of Greek, who resents the intrusion of science and labor.
  - c. For a mother who wants her son to "get everything good from his technical course."
3. The Delights of Fishing.
  - a. For a woman who cannot understand why her husband wants to be always going on silly fishing trips.
  - b. For a group of city men who are devotees of the sport.
  - c. For a small boy who hopes some day to go with "Dad" on his trips.
4. The Value of the Civic Center.
  - a. For a man who resents the extra taxation that would be necessary to make one in his city.
  - b. For a prominent, public-spirited architect.

<sup>1</sup> John Masefield: *Gallipoli*. By courtesy of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, New York City.

- c. For a young woman graduate from college who eagerly desires to "do something" for her city.
- 5. The Spirit of the "Middle West," the "Old South" or any other section of the country.
  - a. For a proud resident.
  - b. For a snuffy resident of another section.
  - c. For a person who has never thought of such a thing.

## CHAPTER III

### DEFINITION

**DEFINITION** is the process of explaining a subject by setting bounds to it, enclosing it within its limits, showing its extent. The ocean is properly defined by the shore; a continent or island is defined by its coastline: shores set limits to the ocean; coastlines bound the island or continent. So, when a child asks, "What is Switzerland?" you show on the map the pink or yellow or green space that is included within certain definite boundaries. These boundaries set a limit to the extent of that country; in other words, they define it. As soon as a traveler steps beyond the limit of that country, he is at once in another realm, has become identified with a quite different set of conditions and circumstances — he is, in fact, in a country that has a different definition from that of Switzerland. In the same way, when some one asks what truth is, or nickel steel, or a grand piano, or humanism, or art, or rotation of crops, or a rocking chair, or the forward pass, you attempt, in your reply, to set bounds to the thing in question, to restrict it, to fence it off, to state the line beyond which if it goes it ceases to be one thing and becomes another. It is by no means always an easy task to find this line. Many a child has come to grief in his attempts to keep safely within the limits of truth and yet be close up to the realm of desirable falsehood. Likewise many witnesses in court have been beguiled or brow-beaten into crossing the line without knowing that they were getting into the country of the enemy. But though the quest for the line may be difficult, a true definition must set off the thing being defined from other things, must set bounds to it, enclose it within its limits, show its extent.

### The Process of Definition

The logical process of defining consists of two steps: first, stating the class or group to which the object of definition belongs, as to say that Switzerland is a *country*, the forward pass is a *strategic device in football*, humanism is a *philosophy of personal development*; and second, pointing out the difference between the object of definition and other members of the class, showing how it is distinguished from them. Since the purpose of definition is to limit the thing defined, the practical value of the first step is at once apparent. If, in total ignorance, a resident of India asks you, "What is ragtime?" the most helpful thing in the world that you can do for him is to cleave away with one stroke everything else in the world but music — absolute exclusion of all other human interests — and place ragtime in that comparatively narrow field. That is the first thing of great help. However many qualities you may attribute to ragtime, — whether you call it inspiring, invigorating, pleasing, detestable, or what not, — you are making at best only slow progress toward defining, really limiting ragtime. The number of pleasing things, for example, is so endless, and the things are so diverse in character that your listener is almost as ignorant after such a quality has been attributed as he was before. But the moment that you limit ragtime to music you scatter untold clouds of doubt and place the inquirer in the comfortable position of having a fairly large working knowledge. What is left for the inquirer to do is merely to distinguish ragtime from other kinds of music — after all, a rather simple task. Likewise in any definition, such as that of rotation of crops, the first necessity is to place the subject in its proper field, in this case agriculture; the grand piano in the class of musical instruments; the rocking chair in the class of furniture.

Now sometimes the task of discovering to what class your

subject belongs is difficult. Is a believer in Unitarianism a Christian? He follows the ethical teachings of Jesus but denies him any special divinity. In this case obviously the question of classification will depend on the definition that we make of Christianity. Is a man who serves the state in legislative or judicial capacity and at the same time writes novels to be called a statesman or a man of letters? Governments have fallen into difficulty with each other over such things as contraband of war, there being great doubt at times whether a particular thing is properly contraband or not. The question is sometimes doubtful — you will be inclined to say, "I don't know what to call this," but in making a definition call it you must. The United States Government, facing the problem of discovering the proper class for frogs' legs, in determining customs duties after much perturbation placed them under the heading "poultry." Ordinarily you will find slight difficulty in determining the class; but in every case you must patiently search until you have found some class into which your subject naturally fits. Until you have done this you obviously cannot set it apart from other members, because you will not really know what the other members are, you will be forced to run through the total list of human ideas and things. Until you know that *oligarchy* is one form of political society you cannot know whether to set it off from *democracy* and *monarchy* or from *Christianity* and *Buddhism*. First, then, however difficult, discover the class to which your subject belongs. In the following definition of a *clearing-house*, you will find that in the course of time the class to which the subject belongs has changed, has come to include more space, needs a larger fence to surround it, and therefore the definition has been changed.

What is a clearing-house? The Supreme Court of the State of Pennsylvania has defined it thus: "It is an ingenious device to

simplify and facilitate the work of the banks in reaching an adjustment and payment of the daily balances due to and from each other at one time and in one place on each day. In practical operation it is a place where all the representatives of the banks in a given city meet, and, under the supervision of a competent committee or officer selected by the associated banks, settle their accounts with each other and make or receive payments of balances and so 'clear' the transactions of the day for which the settlement is made."

But we must go farther than this, for though originally designed as a labor-saving device, the clearing-house has expanded far beyond those limits, until it has become a medium for united action among the banks in ways that did not exist even in the imaginations of those who were instrumental in its inception. A clearing-house, therefore, may be defined as a device to simplify and facilitate the daily exchange of items and settlements of balances among the banks, and a medium for united action upon all questions affecting their mutual welfare.<sup>1</sup>

The second step in the logical process of definition is to show how the subject for definition differs from other members of its class. Once I am told that the piano is a musical instrument I must next learn wherein it differs from the violin, the kettle-drum, and the English horn. The surname *Tomlinson* partly defines a person as a member of the Tomlinson family, but the definition is not complete until the name is modified and the person is distinguished by *George* or *Charles* or whatever name may belong to him. A skillful shepherd knows not only his flocks but also the characteristics of the different members of the flocks, so that he can say, "This sheep is the one in X flock that is always getting into the clover." Here "X flock" is the class, and the quality of abusing the clover is the distinguishing individual tag. Since the desire in this part of the process of defining is to set individuals apart, no mention will be made of quali-

<sup>1</sup> Francis M. Burdick: *The Essentials of Business Law*. By courtesy of the publishers, D. Appleton & Co., New York City. Copyright 1902, 1906, by D. Appleton & Co.

ties that are shared in common but only of those that are peculiar to the individual. These qualities that distinguish individual members of classes from each other are called the *differentia*, just as the class is commonly called the *genus*.

For convenience in keeping the list of differentia reasonably small, to avoid unwieldiness of definition, care must be exercised in choosing the class. When a class which itself contains other possible classes is chosen, a long list of differentia will be necessary. It is well, therefore, to choose a relatively small class to begin with. For example, if I put the piano into the large class of *musical instruments*, I shall then be under the necessity of amassing sufficient differentia to set it apart from wind instruments whether of brass or wood, from instruments of percussion, and from other stringed instruments that do not use metal strings. If I restrict the class to *stringed instruments*, I thereby exclude the differentia of both wind instruments and instruments of percussion. If I further restrict the class, at the beginning, to *instruments with metal strings*, I need then to employ only such differentia as will set it off, perhaps, from instruments that do not have a sounding board for their metal strings. Such restriction of the class is advisable chiefly for purposes of economy of effort in discovering the differentia, and is usually accomplished, in expression, by preceding the class name with a limiting adjective or by using a limiting phrase. This adjective or this phrase is likely to be the expression of differentia among smaller classes, the differentia among individual members being stated more at length later in the definition.

The process of definition will be complete, then, when the subject of definition has been assigned to a class, which for convenience should be relatively small, and the qualities that distinguish the subject from other members of the class have been found.

### The Two Main Classes of Definitions

Two main classes of definition exist: first, the rigidly logical, scientific kind such as is found in dictionaries, textbooks, and other such writings which are not concerned with emotional values; and second, the less rigid, more expanded, more informal kind which aims to please as well as to instruct, and which is found in essays and all forms of writing with a strong human appeal. The two kinds are alike in the presence of both genus and differentia; they differ chiefly in the presence, in the less formal, of the qualities of pleasingness and stimulation as opposed to the quality, in the formal, of scientific impersonality, cold intellectuality. For example, the Standard Dictionary defines a *correspondent* as "one who communicates by means of letters; specifically one who sends regular communications from a distant place to a newspaper or a business house." The author of the volume entitled *Famous War Correspondents*<sup>1</sup> defines, with much the same fundamental ideas, if not indeed exactly the same, a *war correspondent* as follows:

The war correspondent is a newspaper man assigned to cover a campaign. He goes into the field with the army, expecting to send his reports from that witching region known as "the front." He is a special correspondent commissioned to collect intelligence and transmit it from the camp and the battle ground. A non-combatant, he mingles freely with men whose business it is to fight. He may be ten thousand miles from the home office, but he finds competition as keen as ever it is in Fleet Street or Newspaper Row. He is engaged in the most dramatic department of a profession whose infinite variety is equalled only by its fascination. If he becomes a professional rather than an occasional correspondent, wandering will be his business and adventure his daily fare. Mr. A. G. Hales is of the opinion that the newspaper man who is chosen as a war correspondent has won the Victoria Cross of journalism.

<sup>1</sup> F. L. Bullard: *Famous War Correspondents*. By courtesy of the publishers, Little, Brown & Co., Boston. Copyright, 1914.

For the making of a first-rate war correspondent there are required all the qualifications of a capable reporter in any other branch of the profession, and others besides. Perhaps it is true that the regular hack work of the ordinary newspaper man is the best training for the scribe of war. The men who had reported fires and train wrecks in American cities proved themselves able to describe vigorously and clearly the campaign in Cuba. William Howard Russell had been doing a great variety of descriptive writing before he was sent to the Crimea. The prime requisites for a satisfactory war correspondent are those fundamental to success in any kind of newspaper work, the ability to see straight, to write vividly and accurately, and to get a story on the wire.

Occasionally a brilliant workman appears from nowhere, the happy possessor of an almost uncanny intuition of movements and purposes. Such a man was Archibald Forbes. But Forbes, no less than the average special, had to have the physical capacity to march with the private soldier, to ride a hundred miles at a clip at top speed over rough country, to sleep in the open, to stand the heat of the desert and the cold of the mountain height, to endure hunger and thirst and all the deprivations of a hard campaign. Every correspondent at times must keep going until his strength is utterly spent. He must have the tenacity which does not yield to exhaustion until his messages are written and on the way to his paper. When the soldier ceases fighting, the correspondent's work is only begun. He needs also to have a degree of familiarity with the affairs of the present and the history of the past which will secure him the respect of the officers with whom he may associate. Along with the courage of the scout he should possess the suavity and tact of the diplomat, for he will have to get along with men of all types, and occasionally, indeed, his own influence may overlap into the field of international diplomacy. British correspondents, having covered many wars, small and great, since 1870, usually are acquainted with several languages, and often have acquired a knowledge of the technicalities of military science.

Of the two kinds of definition — formal and informal — you will more often have occasion to write the second. You must guard against the danger, in such writing, of allowing

the interest to cloud the truth, of being led into inaccurate partial statements by your desire to please. At the root of every good definition is still the accurate statement of genus and differentia. It is chiefly of the second kind that we shall treat here. If you can write a definition that is pleasing and stimulating and also accurate, you can always boil it down into the more bald formal statement such as the dictionary offers. Whatever powers of grace or neatness in expression you possess, whatever powers of saying things in a pleasing manner, it is your privilege to employ in the writing of definitions.

### General Cautions

For the sake of clearness and general effectiveness a few cautions need to be made. In the first place, be sure to exclude everything from your definition that does not properly belong in it. For example, if you define the aeroplane as a machine that journeys through the air under its own power, you include dirigible balloons, which are not aeroplanes. You must introduce both the characteristics of being heavier than air and of having a plane or planes before your definition can stand. You will make this exclusion by choosing both class and differentia with the greatest care.

In the second place, include everything that does properly belong in the definition. If you define a bridge as a roadway over a stream, either resting on piers or hanging on cables strung over towers, you exclude pontoon bridges certainly, and all bridges across dry chasms, if not other kinds. Not until you include all varieties of things crossed and all the methods of support and the various materials used will your definition be sound and complete. This does not mean that you will have to make an endless list of all possible forms, but that you will make a comprehensive statement which will allow of being distributed over all the different forms and kinds of bridges.

In the third place, use simple and familiar diction. Since the first purpose of a definition is to explain, one that is obscure or difficult makes confusion worse confounded. The famous — or notorious — definition which Dr. Johnson made of so simple a thing as *network*, "anything reticulated or decussated at equal distances with interstices between the intersections," is worse than useless because it positively throws dust upon a comparatively easy matter to perceive — unless the reader take time out for meditation. Remember that the Gettysburg Address and many of Shakespeare's sonnets are largely in words of one syllable. And then do not be afraid that you will be understood; the fire is always presumably somewhat more uncomfortable than the frying-pan.

In the fourth place, do not use the term that you are defining, or any derivative of it. When college freshmen, in mortal combat with a quiz question, define a description as *something that describes*, they use words that profit them nothing. That a cow is a cow is fairly obvious. The temptation to make this mistake, which, in the intellectual world, occupies the relative space of the saucy old advice, "Chase yourself round the block!" occurs usually when a long definition is being written, in which the writer forgets to keep the horizon clear, and finally falls into the formula *x* is *x*. To avoid yielding to such temptation, you will do well, after a definition is complete, to phrase it in a single sentence which shall include both differentia and genus, and in which you can easily discover the evil formula *x* is *x*. Bardolph, in Shakespeare's *King Henry IV*, yields to the temptation — for which we are glad as to humor but not made wise as to meaning — when Shallow puts him to the test:

*Shallow:* Better accommodated! it is good; yea, indeed, it is: good phrases are surely, and ever were, very commendable. Accommodated! it comes of accommodo: very good; a good phrase.

*Bardolph:* Pardon me, sir; I have heard the word. Phrase call

you it? by this good day, I know not the phrase; but I will maintain the word with my sword to be a soldier-like word, and a word of exceeding good command, by heaven. Accommodated; that is, when a man is, as they say, accommodated; or when a man is, being, whereby 'a may be thought to be accommodated; which is an excellent thing.

In the fifth place, be sure that you define, and do not merely "talk about" the subject. Any amount of however interesting comment that fails to accomplish the two necessities of definition, statement of the genus and the differentia, is futile; it is not definition. This temptation, like the former one, will be overcome if you take the trouble to phrase the actual material of your definition in one sentence that really includes both genus and differentia. As a minor suggestion, do not begin your definition with the words, "X is when" or "X is where," unless you are defining either a unit of time or a place — and even then you will do well to avoid these too frequently used phrases.

Finally, do not make your definition too mechanical, too much lacking in real life. Thinking of how you must deal with genus and differentia, you are liable to be overwhelmed with the grim duty of being logical, and to forget that you should also be human, that people read definitions, as other kinds of writing, in the double hope of information and pleasure. No real antagonism exists between logic of the strictest kind and pleasurable presentation, as is proved by the examples quoted during the course of this chapter and at the end. While you remember your subject, remember also your reader; then you will be unlikely to make a dull definition.

### Methods of Defining

You may use various methods of defining. Sometimes you will choose only one, and sometimes you will combine.

There is no special virtue in one method more than another except as sometimes one happens to be more useful for a given case, as we shall see. In selecting your method, then, select on the basis of practical workability for the effect that you desire to create, adhering to one or using several as seems most effective.

a. *The Method of Illustration.*

One of the most useful, natural, and easy methods is that of giving an example or illustration of the thing that is being defined. The great usefulness of this method lies in the stimulating quality that the concrete example always has. If you wish to define an abstract quality, for example, such as *patriotism*, or *honor*, or *generosity*, you will often find advantage, for the first, in calling up the figure of Washington, of Lincoln, of Cromwell; in citing, for the second, the case of some man who, after bankruptcy, has set himself to pay all his former debts, or of Regulus who, though he had the chance not to keep his promise to return to Carthage as prisoner, yet bade Rome farewell and returned to unspeakable torture; in presenting, for the third, a specific set of conditions, such as possession of only one dime, which is then shared with another person who is even less fortunate, or showing a known person, like Sir Philip Sidney, who, though at death's door on the field of battle, urged that the exquisite joy of cold water be given to a comrade who was even more terribly in need. In every one of these cases the quality under definition is presented in an easily grasped, concrete form that has the great advantage of human interest, of stimulating the reader's thought. That using such a method is natural is apparent as soon as we remember that we think largely in concrete forms, specific cases. That it is rather easy is obvious, because so many instances are always at hand to be used.

The danger in this method is that the example chosen will

not be entirely fair. Such lack of fairness may occur if the example covers too little ground of the definition or if it too highly accentuates one phase of the subject of definition. If, for instance, you cite the example of the man who gave away his only pair of shoes, as an example of generosity, you may run the risk of making the reader think that nothing but an extreme act has the real stamp of the generous giver, or that generosity is expressed only in material ways, forgetting that it is generous to acknowledge a fault or to overlook unintended affront. To avoid this danger be sure that your example is fair and sufficiently comprehensive, and if it is not, choose other examples to add to it until you are convinced of the all-round fitness of your definition. In the following examples you may feel that Gissing does not wholly define *poverty*, whereas Shaw is more complete in his approach to defining *ability that gives value for money*, and Mr. Morman by taking a typical example and working it out arrives at complete understanding with perhaps less of piquant interest.

Blackberries hanging thick upon the hedge bring to my memory something of long ago. I had somehow escaped into the country and on a long walk began to feel mid-day hunger. The wayside brambles were fruiting; I picked and ate, and ate on, until I had come within sight of an inn where I might have made a good meal. But my hunger was satisfied; I had no need of anything more, and, as I thought of it, a strange feeling of surprise, a sort of bewilderment, came upon me. What! Could it be that I had eaten, and eaten sufficiently, *without paying?* It struck me as an extraordinary thing. At that time, my ceaseless preoccupation was how to obtain money to keep myself alive. Many a day I had suffered hunger because I durst not spend the few coins I possessed; the food I could buy was in any case unsatisfactory, unvaried. But here nature had given me a feast, which seemed delicious, and I had eaten all I wanted. The wonder held me for a long time, and to this day I can recall it, understand it.

I think there could be no better illustration of what it means to be poor in a great town.<sup>1</sup>

In business, as a rule, a man must make what he gets and something over into the bargain. I have known a man to be employed by a firm of underwriters to interview would-be insurers. His sole business was to talk to them and decide whether to insure or not. Salary, £4000 a year. This meant that the loss of his judgment would have cost his employers more than £4000 a year. Other men have an eye for contracts or whatnot, or are born captains of industry, in which cases they go into business on their own account, and make ten, twenty, or two hundred per cent where you or I would lose five. Or, to turn back a moment from the giants to the minnows, take the case of a woman with the knack of cutting out a dress. She gets six guineas a week instead of eighteen shillings. Or she has perhaps a ladylike air and a figure on which a mantle looks well. For these she can get several guineas a week merely by standing in a show-room letting mantles be tried on her before customers. All these people are renters of ability; and their ability is inseparable from them and dies with them. The excess of their gains over those of an ordinary person with the same capital and education is the "rent" of the exceptional "fertility." But observe, if the able person makes £100,000, and leaves that to his son, who, being but an ordinary gentleman, can get only from two and a half to four per cent on it, that revenue is pure interest on capital and in no sense whatever rent of ability.<sup>2</sup>

By "amortization" is meant the method of paying a debt by regular semi-annual or annual installments. To illustrate:

Suppose a farmer gives a mortgage on his farm of \$1000, with interest at 5 per cent. In addition to the interest, he agrees to pay 2 per cent a year on the principal. This makes a total of 7 per cent a year, or a payment of \$70, which may be paid in two semi-annual installments of \$35 each. The first year's interest and payment on the principal are taken as the amount to be paid annually. But

<sup>1</sup> George Gissing: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, "Autumn." By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

<sup>2</sup> George B. Shaw: *Socialism and Superior Brains*. By courtesy of the publishers, John Lane Company, New York City.

of the first payment, \$50 represents the interest and \$20 the payment on the principal. After the first year's payment, therefore, instead of owing \$1000, the farmer owes only \$980, with interest at 5 per cent.

For the sake of simplicity, let us suppose that payments are made annually. When the next time of payment comes round, the farmer pays his \$70. Since his debt is less, the interest the second year amounts to \$49 instead of \$50, and therefore the payment on the principal is \$21 instead of \$20 as it was the first year. In the second year the debt is reduced to \$959.

On the return of the third time of payment the farmer pays another \$70, of which amount \$47.95 represents the interest and \$22.05 the payment on the principal. This reduces the farmer's mortgage debt to \$936.95.

Now, this system of payment and method of reducing the debt continues until the mortgage has been lifted by a gradual process. Thus, while the annual payments are always the same, the amount of interest is always decreasing and the amount of the payments on the debt is always increasing. Consequently, the mortgage is paid off in ten to forty years according to the rate of payment on the loan that the debtor himself elects to pay when the contract is made. This is the simple principle of amortization, and it is recognized in Europe as the safest, easiest, and best method of reducing land-mortgage indebtedness hitherto conceived and put into practice.<sup>1</sup>

If, then, you have a subject that is abstract and perhaps difficult to understand in abstract explanation; if you wish to stimulate your readers and make their reading pleasant; if, for any reason, you wish to write informally, then you may well decide to employ the useful, natural, and easy method of definition by illustration.

#### *b. The Method of Comparison or Contrast*

A second method, closely akin to that by illustration, is the method of defining by comparison or contrast. The

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Morman: *Principles of Rural Credit*. By courtesy of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, New York City.

value of this method lies in its liveliness and the ease with which it makes an idea comprehended. The liveliness derives largely from the usual presence of specific facts or things with which the subject of definition is compared or to which it is contrasted, and from the imaginative stimulus that perception of similarity in function creates. The implied definition of leader in politics in Lincoln's famous remark about changing political parties in war time, "Don't swap horses while crossing a stream," is not only true, but more, it is interesting. The ease of comprehension is due largely to employing the method of proceeding from the known to the unknown in that comparison is usually made to things already familiar. If contrast is used, there is the added interest of dramatic presentation found especially in oratorical definitions. Liveliness and ease in comprehension make this method a valuable one in addressing a popular or an unlearned body of readers; it presents the truth and it enlists interest. In the following examples you will not be aware of dramatic quality in the first but you will find picturesque qualities in both.

Lord Cromer describes a responsible statesman in a democracy as very much in the position of a man in a boat off the mouth of a tidal river. He long has to strive against wind and current until finally a favorable conjunction of weather and tide forms a wave upon which he rides safely into the harbor. There is an essential truth in this which no man attempting to play the part of leader in a democracy can forget except at his peril. Government by public opinion is bound to get a sufficient body of public opinion on its side. But withal it is manifestly the duty of a leader to help form a just public opinion. He must dare to be temporarily unpopular, if only in that way he can get a temporary hearing for the truths which the people ought to have presented to them. He is to execute the popular will, but he is not to neglect shaping it. It is his duty to be properly receptive, but his main striving ought to be that virtue should go out of him to touch and quicken the masses of his citizens. If their minds and imaginations are played upon

with sufficient persistence and sufficient skill, they will give him back his own ideas with enthusiasm. A man who throws a ball against a wall gets it back again as if hurled by the dead brick and mortar; but the original impulse is in his own muscle. So a democratic leader may say, if he chooses, that he takes only what is pressed upon him by the people; but his function is often first to press it upon them.<sup>1</sup>

The quack novel is a thing which looks like a book, and which is compounded, advertised, and marketed in precisely the same fashion as Castoria, Wine of Cardui, Alcola, Mrs. Summers's free-to-you-my-sister Harmless Headache Remedy, Viavi Tablettes, and other patent medicines, harmful and harmless. As the patent medicine is made of perfectly well-known drugs, so the quack novel of course contains perfectly familiar elements, and like the medicine, it comes wrapped in superlative testimonials from those who say they have swallowed it to their advantage. Instead of "After twenty years of bed-ridden agony, one bottle of your Fosforo cured every ache and completely restored my manhood," we have "The secret of his powers is the same God-given secret that inspired Shakespeare and upheld Dickens." This, from the Philadelphia *Sunday Dispatch*, accompanies a quack novel by Mr. Harold Bell Wright, of whom the Portland, Oregon, *Journal* remarks, "It is this almost clairvoyant power of reading the human soul that has made Mr. Wright's books among the most remarkable works of the present age." Similar to that aroma of piety and charity which accompanies the quack medicines, an equally perceptible odor of sanctity is wafted to us with Mr. Wright; and just as imitators will make their boxes and bottles to resemble those of an already successful trade article, so are Mr. Wright's volumes given that red cloth and gold lettering which we have come to associate with the bindings of Mr. Winston Churchill's very popular and agreeable novels. Lastly — like the quack medicines — the quack novel is (mostly) harmful; not always because it is poisonous (though this occurs), but because it pretends to be literature and is taken for literature by the millions who swallow it year after

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Pollak: *Fifty Years of American Idealism*. Houghton Mifflin Company. By courtesy of *The Nation*.

year as their chief mental nourishment, and whose brains it saps and dilutes. In short, both these shams — the book and the medicine — win and bamboozle their public through methods almost identical.<sup>1</sup>

For complete truth you need to present both resemblance and difference. This necessity is apparent as soon as we remember that the differentia are of vital importance, that we understand the subject only when we see how it differs from other members of the same class. When these differences are obvious, of course they need no mention. But in defining *wit and humor*, for example, or *immorality and unconventionality*, we must know not only the parallelisms but also the divergencies. The best method of procedure is to discover in each of the subjects compared the vital things, the heart without which it could not exist, and then to observe how these work out in the particulars of the subject. In defining *State* and *Nation* in the following selection Mr. Russell takes care to show both resemblances and differences.

*Nation* is not to be defined by affinities of language or a common historical origin, though these things often help to produce a nation. Switzerland is a nation, in spite of diversities of race, religion, and language. England and Scotland now form one nation, though they did not do so at the time of our Civil War. This is shown by Cromwell's saying, in the height of the conflict, that he would rather be subject to the dominion of the royalists than to that of the Scotch. Great Britain was one state before it was one nation; on the other hand, Germany was one nation before it was one state. What constitutes a nation is a sentiment and an instinct — a sentiment of similarity and an instinct of belonging to the same group or herd. The instinct is an extension of the instinct which constitutes a flock of sheep, or any other group of gregarious animals. The sentiment which goes with this is like a milder and more extended form of family feeling. When

<sup>1</sup> Owen Wister: *Quack Novels and Democracy*. By courtesy of The Atlantic Monthly Company, Boston.

we return to England after having been on the Continent, we feel something friendly in the familiar ways, and it is easy to believe that Englishmen on the whole are virtuous while many foreigners are full of designing wickedness.

Such feelings make it easy to organize a nation into a state. It is not difficult, as a rule, to acquiesce in the orders of a national government. We feel that it is our government, and that its decrees are more or less the same as those which we should have given if we ourselves had been the governors. There is an instinctive, and usually unconscious, sense of a common purpose animating the members of a nation. This becomes especially vivid when there is a war or a danger of war. Any one who, at such a time, stands out against the orders of his government feels an inner conflict quite different from any that he would feel in standing out against the orders of a foreign government, in whose power he might happen to find himself. If he stands out, he does so with a more or less conscious hope that his government may in time come to think as he does; whereas, in standing out against a foreign government, no such hope is necessary. This group instinct, however it may have arisen, is what constitutes a nation, and what makes it important that the boundaries of nations should also be the boundaries of states.<sup>1</sup>

### c. *The Method of Division*

A third method, often used, and similar in its general form to analysis, divides the subject into its various headings, the sum of which must equal the whole. This method differs from analysis, perhaps, in that it treats the subject throughout as a unit rather than as a congregation of parts. This method may be used to define a subject like *mathematics*, in stating that it is the pure science which includes arithmetic, algebra, geometry, etc., or to define a quality like *patriotism*, by enumerating the qualities that patriotism has. These qualities may be, also, the uses to which the subject can be put, as in defining a tool or a machine. The

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand Russell: *National Independence and Internationalism*. By courtesy of The Atlantic Monthly Company, Boston.

method consists in establishing the genus and then, from a mental map of the subject, selecting the various parts that constitute the whole, whether these parts be of physical extent, as in defining the United States by giving the various sections of the country, or of spiritual significance, as in defining an honest man by stating the qualities that he should possess.

One danger from this method is lack of completeness; great practical value attaches here to the caution to be sure that the definition includes all that properly belongs under it. Another danger is in the temptation to "talk about" the subject without actually defining it, merely saying some pleasant things and then ceasing. The caution against this danger in general must be remembered. Properly used, this method, though it is sometimes rather formal, should result in great clearness through completeness of definition. The following celebrated definition of a "classic" is a good example of compact definition by this method, and the definition of "moral atmosphere" of a more leisurely, informal breaking-up.

A classic is an author who has enriched the human mind, who has really added to its treasure, who has got it to take a step further; who has discovered some unequivocal moral truth, or penetrated to some eternal passion, in that heart of man where it seemed as though all were known and explored, who has produced his thought, or his observation, or his invention, under some form, no matter what, so it be large, great, acute, and reasonable, sane and beautiful in itself; who has spoken to all in a style of his own, yet a style which finds itself the style of everybody, — in a style that is at once new and antique, and is the contemporary of all ages.<sup>1</sup>

The moral atmosphere of the office was ideal. I mean more in the extended and not alone in our specific English sense, though in the latter it was even perhaps more marked. There was not only no temporizing, compromising, compounding with candor, in either

<sup>1</sup> Sainte-Beuve.

major matters or trifling; there was no partiality or ingenuity or bland indifference by which the devil may be, and so often is, whipped round the stump. There was in the *Nation's* field and conception of its function no temptation to anything of this sort, to be sure, which consideration may conceivably qualify its assessment of merit on the Day of Judgment — a day when we may hope the sins of daily journalism will, in consequence of the same consideration, be extended some leniency — but certainly cannot obscure the fact of its conspicuous integrity. There were people then — as now — that complained of its fairness; which involved, to my mind, the most naïve attitude imaginable, since it was the *Nation's* practice that had provided the objector with his criterion of fairness in journalism. Of course he might assert that this was only a way of saying that the paper made extraordinary claims which in his estimation it failed to justify; but this was verbiage, the fact being as I have stated it.

But I also mean by moral atmosphere the peace, the serenity, the gentleness, the self-respect, the feeling of character, that pervaded the office. We seemed, to my sense, so recently filled with the reactions of Park Row phenomena, "to lie at anchor in the stream of Time," as Carlyle said of Oxford — which, actually, we were very far from doing; there was never any doubt of the *Nation's* being what is now called a "live wire," especially among those who took hold of it unwarily — as now and then some one did. Mr. Garrison shared the first editorial room with me. Mr. Godkin had the back office. The publication offices were in front, occupied by the amiable Mr. St. John and his staff, which included a gentle and aristocratic colored bookkeeper who resembled an East Indian philosopher — plainly a Garrisonian protégé. The silence I especially remember as delightful, and I never felt from the first the slightest constraint; Mr. Garrison had the courtesy that goes with active considerateness. The quiet was broken only by the occasional interchange of conversation between us, or by the hearty laugh of Mr. Godkin, whose laugh would have been the most noteworthy thing about him if he had not had so many other noteworthy characteristics; or by a visit now and then from Arthur Sedgwick, in my time not regularly "on" the paper, who always brought the larger world in with him (the office *was* perhaps a little

cloistered as a rule), or the appearance of Earl Shinn with his art or dramatic criticism — both the best written, if not also the best we have ever had in this country, and the latter so distinguished, I think, as to be unique.

Of course, there were visitors, contributors and candid friends, but mainly we worked in almost Quakerish tranquillity five days in the week during my incumbency.<sup>1</sup>

#### *d. The Method of Repetition*

A fourth method, which may be used in connection with any other, consists in repeating the definition over and over in different words, from different points of view, driving home by accumulated emphasis. The value of this method lies in its feeling of absolute sureness in the reader's mind: once completed, the definition seems quite settled, quite tamped down, quite clinched. It is a difficult method to employ, for the writer is in great danger of saying exactly the same thing again and again, forgetting to assume different points of view. From such a definition tediousness is of course the result. The subjects treated by this method are likely to be abstract matters upon which light is shed from various angles, as if one poured spot lights from all sides upon some object which remains the same but which delivers up all its phases. Emerson often used this method, as in the following example where both the method of repetition and that of comparison are used:

The two parties which divide the state, the party of Conservatism and that of Innovation, are very old, and have disputed the possession of the world ever since it was made. . . . It is the counteraction of the centripetal and the centrifugal forces. Innovation is the salient energy; Conservatism the pause on the last movement. "That which is was made by God," says Conservatism. "He is leaving that, he is entering this other," enjoins Innovation.

There is always a certain meanness in the argument of conserva-

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Pollak: *Fifty Years of American Idealism*. Houghton Mifflin Company. By courtesy of *The Nation*.

tism, joined with a certain superiority in its fact. It affirms because it holds. Its fingers clutch the fact, and it will not open its eyes to see a better fact. The castle which conservatism is set to defend is the actual state of things, good and bad. The project of innovation is the best possible state of things. Of course conservatism always has the worst of the argument, is always apologizing, pleading a necessity, pleading that to change would be to deteriorate: it must saddle itself with the mountainous load of the violence and vice of society, must deny the possibility of good, deny ideas, and suspect and stone the prophet; whilst innovation is always in the right, triumphant, attacking, and sure of final success. Conservatism stands on man's confessed limitations, reform on his indisputable infinitude; conservatism on circumstance, liberalism on power; one goes to make an adroit member of the social frame, the other to postpone all things to the man himself; conservatism is debonair and social, reform is individual and imperious. We are reformers in the spring and summer, in autumn and winter we stand by the old; reformers in the morning, conservers at night. Reform is affirmative, conservatism negative; conservatism goes for comfort, reform for truth. Conservatism is more candid to behold another's worth; reform more disposed to maintain and increase its own. Conservatism makes no poetry, breathes no prayer, has no invention; it is all memory. Reform has no gratitude, no prudence, no husbandry. It makes a great difference to your figure and your thought whether your foot is advancing or receding. Conservatism never puts the foot forward; in the hour when it does that, it is not establishment, but reform. Conservatism tends to universal seeming and treachery, believes in a negative fate; believes that men's temper governs them; that for me it avails not to trust in principles, they will fail me, I must bend a little; it distrusts nature; it thinks there is a general law without a particular application, — law for all that does not include any one. Reform in its antagonism inclines to asinine resistance, to kick with hoofs; it runs to egotism and bloated self-conceit; it runs to a bodiless pretension, to unnatural refining and elevation which ends in hypocrisy and sensual reaction.

And so, while we do not go beyond general statements, it may be safely affirmed of these two metaphysical antagonists, that each

is a good half but an impossible whole. Each exposes the abuses of the other, but in a true society, in a true man, both must combine.<sup>1</sup>

### e. *The Method of Elimination*

Two methods, which are perhaps less frequently found, but which are none the less useful, remain to be mentioned. The first is the method of elimination, that is, the method of defining a thing by telling what it is not, by eliminating all things with which it might become confused. This method is of great value in defining an idea which is often considered to mean what it actually does not. By shutting out the erroneous interpretations, one by one, the errors are finally disposed of. This method is most effective when not only are the wrong interpretations excluded, but the correct idea, interpretation, is positively stated at some point. If this is not done there lingers in the reader's mind a taint of suspicion that either the author did not know exactly the correct meaning, or that the subject is really too difficult to bear real definition. And with a reader who does not think clearly in original ways a positive statement is almost essential lest he be unable to tell what the subject really is, after all, being unable to supply the residue after the process of elimination has been completed. Following this method Mr. Cross defines Socialism by showing that it is not anarchy, is not single tax, is not communism, and is not other systems with which it is often confused. The result is to leave socialism standing out by itself with clearness. In the following definition of college spirit the author has followed the method of elimination to clear away the haze that in many minds surrounds the subject:

College spirit is like ancestry: we are all supposed to have it, but few of us know intimately what it is. The freshman in whose heart beats desire to show loyalty, the graduate whose pulse stirs as the

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The Conservative," in *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

train nears the "little old college," the alumnus who unties his purse-strings at the clarion call of a deficit — do these show loyalty by mere desire or by deeds? And if by deeds, by what kind of action shall their loyalty be determined?

In the first place, college spirit is not mere voice culture. The man who yells until his face is purple and his throat is a candidate for the rest cure is not necessarily displaying college spirit — though he may possess it. Yelling is not excluded; it is merely denied the first place. For, to parody Shakespeare, a man can yell and yell and still be a college slacker. Cheering, indiscriminate noise making, even singing the college song with gusto at athletic games — none of these will stamp a man as necessarily loyal. Nor will participation in athletic sports or in "college activities" of other natures be sufficient to declare a man, for the participation may be of a purely selfish nature. The man who makes a record in the sprints chiefly for his own glory, or the man who edits the college paper because by so doing he can "make a good thing out of it" for himself, is not possessed of true college spirit, for college spirit demands more than mere selfishness. In the same way, taking part in celebrations, marching down Main Street with a flag fluttering round his ears, a sunflower in his buttonhole, an inane grin on his face, a swagger in his gait, and a determination to tell the whole world that his "dear old Alma Mater" is "the finest little college in the world" — this, too, is without avail, though it is not necessarily opposed to college spirit. For this exhibition, also, is largely selfish. Likewise, becoming a "grind," removing one's self from the human fellowship that college ought to furnish in its most delightful form, and becoming determined to prepare for a successful business career without regard to the warm flow of human emotion through the heart — this is not college spirit. All these harmless things are excluded because they are primarily selfish, and college spirit is primarily opposed to selfishness.

True college spirit is found in the man whose heart has warmed to the love of his college, whose eyes have caught the vision of the ideals that the college possesses, whose brain has thought over and understood these ideals until they have become very fibre of his being. This man will yell not for the selfish pleasure of wallowing in sentimentality, but for the solid glory of his college; will run

and leap, will edit the paper with the desire to make and keep the college in the front rank of athletic, social, and intellectual life; will study hard that the college may not be disgraced through him; will conduct himself like a gentleman that no one may sneer at the institution which has sponsored him; will resent any slurs upon the fair name of the college; will be willing to sacrifice himself, his own personal glory, for the sake of the college; will be willing to give of his money and his time until, perhaps, it hurts. And above all, he will never forget the gleam of idealism that he received in the old halls, the vision of his chance to serve his fellows. The man who does these things, who thinks these things, has true college spirit.

#### *f. The Method of Showing Origin, Cause, Effect*

The other of these two methods is that of defining by showing the origin or causes of the subject or by showing its effects. If we can be made to see what forces went to the making of anything, or what has resulted from it, we shall have a fairly clear idea of the nature of the thing. Thus we may perhaps best understand the nature of *cabinet government* by showing how the system came into being, what need it filled, what forces produced it. The same method might make clear *primitive Greek drama, the Hanseatic League, fertilization of land, the Federal Reserve System of Banking, the modern orchestra*. And by showing the effects we might define such matters as *the Montessori method of education, the Feudal System, anarchy, militarism*. The writer of a definition after this method needs to take care that when he has shown the various causes or effects, he surely binds them somehow together and vitally to the subject of definition. There must be no dim feeling in the mind of the reader that, after all, the subject is not yet clearly limned, not yet set off from other things. The definition which follows makes clear the origin of the mechanical engineer, and by showing what he does, what need there was for him, what lack he fills, makes clear what he is.

The period of systematic and scientific power development is coincident with the true progress of the most basal of the several branches of natural philosophy, chemistry, physics, mechanics, thermodynamics, and the theory of elasticity of materials of construction; and there is no doubt that the steam engine, which was designed and built by workmen before these were formulated, attracted the attention of philosophers who, in attempting to explain what took place in it, created a related body of principles by which future development was guided, and which are now the fundamental bases for the design of the future. Those men who became familiar with the natural sciences, and also with the shop methods of making machinery, and who brought both to bear on the problem of the production of machinery for specified conditions, combining the special knowledge of the scientist and the shop mechanic, were the first mechanical engineers; and the profession of mechanical engineering, which is the term applied to this sort of business, was created out of the efforts to improve power systems, so as to make them more efficient and adapted to all classes of service, and to render that service for the least cost.<sup>1</sup>

Emerson makes a definition of the civilization of America in the following selection wherein he describes the effect of American society and life upon the individual.

The true test of civilization is, not the crops, not the size of cities, not the census, — no, but the kind of man the country turns out. I see the vast advantages of this country, spanning the breadth of the temperate zone. I see the immense material prosperity, — towns on towns, states on states, and wealth piled in the massive architecture of cities: California quartz, mountains dumped down in New York to be repiled architecturally alongshore from Canada to Cuba, and thence westward to California again. But it is not New York streets, built by the confluence of workmen and wealth of all nations, though stretching out toward Philadelphia until they touch it, and northward until they touch New Haven, Hartford, Springfield, Worcester, and Boston, — not these that make the real estimation. But when I look over this constellation

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Luce: *Power*. By courtesy of the publishers, the Columbia University Press.

of cities which animate and illustrate the land, and see how little the government has to do with their daily life, how self-helped and self-directed all families are, — knots of men in purely natural societies, societies of trade, of kindred blood, of habitual hospitality, house and house, man acting on man by weight of opinion, of longer or better-directed industry; the refining influence of women, the invitation which experience and permanent causes open to youth and labor: when I see how much each virtuous and gifted person whom all men consider, lives affectionately with scores of people who are not known far from home, and perhaps with greatest reason reckons these people his superiors in virtue and in the symmetry and force of their qualities, — I see what cubic values America has, and in these a better certificate of civilization than great cities or enormous wealth.<sup>1</sup>

These, then, are the various methods that are in common use. The list might be extended, but perhaps enough varieties have been discussed to be of practical value. The choice of method will depend on the result that the writer wishes to accomplish; at times he will wish to please the reader's fancy with an illustration, and again he may wish to contrast the subject to something else. If at any time more methods than one are useful, there is not the slightest objection to combining; in fact, most definitions of any length will be found to have more than one method employed. Remember that the methods were made for you, not you for the methods. And so long as you make your subject clear, so long as you set it off by itself in a class, distinct from other members of the class, you can be sure of the value of your definition.

#### EXERCISES

- I. Discover the restricting adjectives or phrases that will reduce the number of differentia required by the genus in the following definitions:
  1. Vaudeville is an *entertainment*.
  2. Pneumonia is a *disease*.

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Civilisation," in *Society and Solitude*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

3. The Browning gun is *a machine*.
  4. Landscape gardening is *an occupation*.
  5. Smelting is *an operation*.
  6. Lyrics are *writing*.
  7. A college diploma is *a statement by a body of men*.
  8. Rotation of crops is *a system*.
  9. The Republican party is *an organization*.
  10. Anglo-Saxon is *a language*.
  11. An axe is *a tool*.
  12. A printing press is *a steel structure*.
  13. A hair-net is *wearing*.
  14. Literature is *writing*.
  15. Militarism is *an attitude of mind*.
- II.** Write a definition of any of the following, showing how the subject has shifted its genus by its development, as the *clearing house* (page 75) has.
1. The Temperance Movement (sentimental crusade; sensible campaign for efficiency).
  2. War.
  3. Incantation (means of salvation; curiosity).
  4. Household Science (drudgery; occupation).
  5. Aristocracy (through physical strength; through birth; through property).
  6. Justice (B.C.; A.D.).
  7. Chemistry (magic; utility).
  8. The Presidency of the United States (as changed by Mr. Wilson's procedure with Congress).
  9. The Theater (under Puritan and Cavalier).
  10. Electricity (curiosity; fearsome thing; utility).
- Of course any one of these ten subjects can be defined with a changeless genus, but such a genus is likely to be in the realm of the abstract, pretty thoroughly divorced from practical life.
- III.** From the following definitions taken from Webster's New International Dictionary construct definitions of a more amplified, pleasing nature, after the manner of the definition of *war correspondents*.
1. *Laziness* is the state of being disinclined to action or exertion; averse to labor; indolent; idle; slothful.
  2. *Efficiency* is the quality of being efficient, of producing an effect or effects; efficient power or action.
  3. A *department store* is a store keeping a great variety of goods which are arranged in several departments, especially one with dry goods as the principal stock.
  4. *Metabolism* is the sum of the processes concerned in the building up of protoplasm and its destruction incidental to the manifestation of vital phenomena; the chemical changes proceeding con-

tinually in living cells, by which the energy is provided for the vital processes and activities and new material is assimilated to repair the waste.

5. *Judgment* is the faculty of judging or deciding rightly, justly, or wisely; good sense; as, a man of judgment; a politician without judgment.
6. *Puddling* is the art or process of converting cast iron into wrought iron, or, now rarely, steel by subjecting it to intense heat and frequent stirring in a reverberatory furnace in the presence of oxidizing substances, by which it is freed from a portion of its carbon and other impurities.
7. *Overhead cost* is the general expenses of a business, as distinct from those caused by particular pieces of traffic.
8. A *joke* is something said or done for the sake of exciting a laugh; something witty or sportive (commonly indicating more of hilarity or humor than jest).
9. A *diplomat* is one employed or skilled in the art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations, as in arranging treaties; performing the business or art of conducting international discourse.
10. A *visionary* is one who relies, or tends to rely, on visions, or impractical ideas, projects, or the like; an impractical person.
11. An *entrepreneur* is an employer in his character of one who assumes the risk and management of business.
12. *Loyalty* is fidelity to a superior, or to duty, love, etc.
13. A *prig* is one narrowly and self-consciously engrossed in his own mental or spiritual attainments; one guilty of moral or intellectual folly; a conceited precisian.
14. *Heresy* is an opinion held in opposition to the established or commonly received doctrine, and tending to promote division or dissension.
15. *Eugenics* is the science of improving stock, whether human or animal, or of improving plants.

- IV. Compare the definitions of the following which you find in the Century Dictionary, the Standard Dictionary, the Webster's New International Dictionary and the New English Dictionary; find the common elements, and make a definition of your own.

- |                          |                    |                        |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Literature.           | 6. Inertia.        | 11. Finance.           |
| 2. Living wage.          | 7. Fodder.         | 12. Capital.           |
| 3. Capillary attraction. | 8. Religion.       | 13. Soil physics.      |
| 4. Sympathy.             | 9. Introspection.  | 14. Progress.          |
| 5. Classicism.           | 10. Individuality. | 15. Narrow-mindedness. |

- V. Look up the definitions of the following terms and estimate the resulting amount of increase in your knowledge of the subject which includes the terms. Do you find any stimulus toward thinking about the subject? What would you say, as the result of this investigation, about

## EXPOSITORY WRITING

the value of definitions? What does Coleridge mean by his statement "Language thinks for us"?

1. *Religion*: awe, reverence, duty, mystery, peace, priest, worship, loyalty, prayer, supplication, trust, divinity, god, service, church, temple, heaven, fate.
2. *Socialism*: property, social classes, economic rights, capital, labor, wages, the masses, aristocracy, envy, self-respect, economic distribution, labor union, boycott, strike, lock-out, materialism, profit-sharing.
3. *Ability*: genius, wit, talent, insight, judgment, perseverance, logic, imagination, originality, intellectuality, vitality.
4. *Music*: sound, rhythm, melody, harmony, orchestra, interval (musical), key, beat, tonic, modulation, musical register, polyphony, monophony, sonata, oratorio, musical scale, diatonic, chromatic, tempo.
5. *Democracy*: independence, suffrage, representation, equality, popular, co-operation.

**VI.** Are the two statements which follow definitions? If not, why not? What would be the effect of the use of definitions of this type in argument? Write a defining theme with such a definition as its nucleus, and test its value.

1. Beauty is its own excuse for being.
2. Virtue is its own reward.

**VII.** In the following definitions <sup>1</sup> what are the genera? Are the definitions fair? How would you criticize them in general? Write a theme using the differentia noted, and trying to catch in the theme the spirit that is shown in the lists.

Highbrow: Browning, anthropology, economics, Bacon, the uplift, inherent sin, Gibbon, fourth dimension, Euripides, "eyether," pâté de foie gras, lemon phosphate, Henry Cabot Lodge, Woodrow Wilson.

Low-highbrow: Municipal government, Kipling, socialism, Shakespeare, politics, Thackeray, taxation, golf, grand opera, bridge, chicken à la Maryland, "eether," stocks and bonds, gin rickey, Theodore Roosevelt, chewing gum in private.

High-lowbrow: Musical comedy, euchre, baseball, moving pictures, small steak medium, whiskey, Robert W. Chambers, purple socks, chewing gum with friends.

Lowbrow: Laura Jean Libbey, ham sandwich, have n't came, pitch, I and her, melodrama, hair oil, the Duchess, beer, George M. Cohan, red flannels, toothpicks, Bathhouse John, chewing gum in public.

**VIII.** Expand the following definition <sup>2</sup> into a theme, using the combined

<sup>1</sup> From B. L. T.'s "The Line o' Type Column." By courtesy of the *Chicago Tribune*.

<sup>2</sup> George Bernard Shaw: *The Sanity of Art*. By courtesy of the publishers, Boni & Liveright.

methods of illustration and comparison. What is the value of having the heart of the definition stated before the theme is begun?

The worthy artist or craftsman is he who serves the physical and moral senses by feeding them with pictures, musical compositions, pleasant houses and gardens, good clothes and fine implements, poems, fictions, essays, and dramas which call the heightened senses and ennobled faculties into pleasurable activity. The great artist is he who goes a step beyond the demand, and, by supplying works of a higher beauty and a higher interest than have yet been perceived, succeeds, after a brief struggle with its strangeness, in adding this fresh extension of sense to the heritage of the race.

IX. See "Poverty" (page 84).

1. In view of the fact that Gissing uses so slight an illustration to fix his ideal, what makes the definition valuable? Compare the value of this definition with another of the same subject such as you might find in a text on Sociology or Economics.
2. Define by illustration any of the following: Homesickness, Jealousy, Despair, Discouragement, Vulgarity, Opulence, Misery, Cheapness, Tenacity, Anger, Adaptability, Man of action, Man of executive ability, Statesman, Ward boss, Man of learning, Luck, Courage, Business success, "Bonehead Play," Political shrewdness, The "College Widow," Perfect technique, Up-to-date factory, Social tact, A Snob, "Some Kid," Other-worldliness, A Gentleman, A Lady, A "real meal," A fighting chance, Good breeding, A "Social climber," Community music, Poetic justice, A wage-slave, A political ring, Good team-work, Elasticity of mind, Bigotry.

How far is definition by illustration concerned with *morality*? Could you, for example, so illustrate *courage* as to seem to exclude a really courageous person? What necessity in employing this method does your answer to the preceding question indicate?

Define any of the following: The ideal leader of the "gang," The ideal ward boss, The ideal town librarian, The ideal teacher, The ideal military general, captain, corporal, The ideal head-waiter, The ideal foreman in a factory, The ideal soda-clerk, The ideal athletic coach, The ideal intellectual leader, The ideal orchestra conductor, The ideal mayor, The ideal "boss" in a steel mill, on a farm, of an engineering gang, of cotton pickers, of lumberjacks.

Is the definition of a *Responsible Statesman* any the less sound because the differentia are duties rather than facts? Write

a theme explaining why an executive too far "ahead of his times" fails of immediate results.

3. In the manner of the definition of *Amortization*, write a definition of the following: Collective buying, Sabotage, Montessori method of education, Dry cleaning, Dry farming.
- X. What is the chief value of the following selection as a real definition? Which is of greater value, this selection or the kind of definition that would be found in a text on geography?

Define, in a manner similar to that of the selection: New England, The Middle West, The "Old Dominion," "The Cradle of Liberty," "Gotham," The "Gold Coast," "Dixie," "The Old South," "The Auld Sod," "The Corn Belt," "The Wheat Belt," The Anthracite Region, The Land of Big Game, "The Land of Heart's Desire," "The Cockpit of Europe," "The Vacation Land."

Between the Seine and the Rhine lay once a beautiful land wherein more history was made, and recorded in old monuments full of grace and grandeur and fancy, than in almost any other region of the world. The old names were best, for each aroused memory and begot strange dreams: Flanders, Brabant, the Palatinate; Picardy, Valois, Champagne, Franche-Comté; Artois, Burgundy, and Bar. And the town names ring with the same sonorous melody, evoking the ghosts of a great and indelible past: Bruges, Ghent, Louvain, and Liége; Aix-la-Chapelle, Coblenz, and Trèves; Ypres and Lille, Tournai and Fontenoy, Arras and Malplaquet; Laon, Nancy, Verdun, and Varennes; Amiens, Soissons, and Reims. Cæsar, Charlemagne, St. Louis, Napoleon, with proconsuls, paladins, crusaders, and marshals unnumbered; kings, prince-bishops, monks, knights, and aureoled saints take form and shape again at the clang of the splendid names.

It is not a large land, this Heart of Europe; three hundred and fifty miles, perhaps, from the Alps to the sea, and not more than two hundred and fifty from the Seine at Paris to the Rhine at Cologne; half the size, shall we say, of Texas; but what Europe was for the thousand years following the fall of Rome, this little country — or the men that made it great — was responsible. Add the rest of Normandy, and the spiritual energy of the Holy See, and with a varying and sometimes negligible influence from the Teutonic lands beyond the Rhine, and you have the mainsprings of mediævalism, even though for its full manifestation you must take into account the men in the far countries of the Italian peninsula and the Iberian, in France and England, Bavaria, Saxony, Bohemia.<sup>1</sup>

#### XI. Note the two selections that follow, in comparison with the definition.

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Adams Cram: *The Heart of Europe*. By courtesy of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City. Copyright, 1915.

tions of a responsible statesman and quack novels on pages 87 and 88, and write a definition of any of the following groups, using the method of comparison and contrast.

A sale of personal property is the transfer of its general ownership from one person to another for a price in money. It is almost always the result of a contract between the seller and the buyer. If the contract provides for the transfer of ownership at once the transaction is called "a present sale," or "a bargain and sale," or "an executed contract of sale." If it provides for the transfer of ownership at some future time it is called "a contract to sell," or "an executory contract of sale."

The business transaction most nearly resembling a sale is that of barter, or the transfer of one article of personal property for another, as when A and B trade horses, or wagons, or oats, or cows. It differs from a sale only in this, that the consideration for each transfer is the counter-transfer of a chattel instead of money. Next to barter in its likeness to sale is a mortgage of personal property, usually called a chattel mortgage. This, in form, is a sale, but it contains a proviso that if the mortgagor pays a certain amount of money, or does some other act, at a stipulated time, the sale shall be void. Even though the mortgagor does not perform the act promised at the agreed time, he still has the right to redeem the property from the mortgage by paying his debt with interest. In other words, a chattel mortgage does not transfer general ownership, or absolute property in the chattels, while a sale does.

A sale differs from a bailment. . . . The former is the transfer of title to goods, the latter of their possession. A bailee undertakes to restore to the bailor the very thing bailed, although it may be in a changed form, while the buyer is to pay money to the seller for the subject-matter of their contract.<sup>1</sup>

The familiar distinction between the poetic and the scientific temper is another way of stating the same difference. The one fuses or crystallizes external objects and circumstances in the medium of human feeling and passion; the other is concerned with the relations of objects and circumstances among themselves, including in them all the facts of human consciousness, and with the discovery and classification of these relations. There is, too, a corresponding distinction between the aspects which conduct, character, social movement, and the objects of nature are able to present, according as we scrutinize them with a view to exactitude of knowledge, or are stirred by some appeal which they make to

<sup>1</sup> Francis M. Burdick: *The Essentials of Business Law*. By courtesy of the publishers, D. Appleton & Co., New York City. Copyright, 1902 and 1908.

our various faculties and forms of sensibility, our tenderness, sympathy, awe, terror, love of beauty, and all the other emotions in this momentous catalogue. The starry heavens have one side for the astronomer, as astronomer, and another for the poet, as poet. The nightingale, the skylark, the cuckoo, move one sort of interest in an ornithologist, and a very different sort in a Shelley or a Wordsworth. The hoary and stupendous formations of the inorganic world, the thousand tribes of insects, the great universe of plants, from those whose size and form and hue make us afraid as if they were deadly monsters, down to "the meanest flower that blows," all these are clothed with one set of attributes by scientific intelligence, and with another by sentiment, fancy, and imaginative association.<sup>1</sup>

1. Autocracy and Democracy.
2. Fame and Notoriety.
3. Cribbing and Lying.
4. Immorality and Unconventionality.
5. Musician and Music Lover.
6. Popularity and Cheapness.
7. Enthusiast and Crank.
8. An Irish Bull and a Paradox.
9. Puppy Love and Real Love.
10. Boiling and Broiling.
11. Honesty and Truthfulness.
12. White Lies and Falsehoods.
13. Liberty and License.
14. Wages and Unearned Increment.
15. Knowledge and Scholarship.
16. Religion and Superstition.
17. Broadmindedness and Spinelessness.
18. Architecture and Architectural Engineering.
19. Socialism and Anarchy.
20. Wit and Humor.
21. Enough and Sufficient.
22. Genetic Heredity and Social Heredity.
23. Lying and Diplomacy.
24. Theology and Religion.
25. Force, Energy, and Power.
26. Sanitary Engineers and Plumbers.
27. Business, Trade, and Commerce.
28. "Kidding" and Taunting.
29. Eminence and Prominence.
30. Realism and Romanticism.
31. Kinetic and Potential Energy.

<sup>1</sup> John Morley: *Miscellanies*, vol. I. By courtesy of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, New York City.

32. Popular and Permanent Literature.
33. A "Gentleman Farmer" and a Producer.
34. An Employer and a Slave-driver.
35. A Practical Joke and a "Mean Trick."

Is the following selection properly a definition by the method of comparison? What is defined? Are the general statements that serve as background true? In how far does the whole selection depend for its validity upon the truth of these general statements?

There is a difference between boys and men, but it is a difference of self-knowledge chiefly. A boy wants to do everything because he does not know he cannot; a man wants to do something because he knows he cannot do everything; a boy always fails, and a man sometimes succeeds because the man knows and the boy does not know. A man is better than a boy because he knows better; he has learned by experience that what is a harm to others is a greater harm to himself, and he would rather not do it. But a boy hardly knows what harm is, and he does it mostly without realizing that it hurts. He cannot invent anything, he can only imitate; and it is easier to imitate evil than good. You can imitate war, but how are you going to imitate peace? So a boy passes his leisure in contriving mischief. If you get another fellow to walk into a wasp's camp, you can see him jump and hear him howl, but if you do not, then nothing at all happens. If you set a dog to chase a cat up a tree, then something has been done; but if you do not set the dog on the cat, then the cat just lies in the sun and sleeps and you lose your time. If a boy could find out some way of doing good, so that he could be active in it, very likely he would want to do good now and then; but as he cannot, he very seldom wants to do good.<sup>1</sup>

**XII. Does the style of the definition of moral atmosphere (page 9) fit well with the subject? Would the definition be more effective if written in a more formal style?**

**Define :**

1. The scholarly atmosphere of a university.
2. The business atmosphere of the Stock Exchange.
3. The holy atmosphere of a large church.
4. The inhuman atmosphere of an ordinary criminal court.
5. The human atmosphere of a reunion (of a class, a family, a group of friends).

<sup>1</sup> William Dean Howells : *A Boy's Town*. By courtesy of the publishers, Harper & Brothers, New York City. Copyright, 1890.

6. The majestic atmosphere of Niagara Falls.
7. The beautiful atmosphere of a pond of skaters.
8. The 

inspiring
overpowering
brutal
beautiful

 atmosphere of a steel mill.
9. The calm atmosphere of a dairy farm.

- XIII. Does the following selection serve to define *honor* as too difficult of attainment, as too closely bound up with fighting? Is any definition of *privilege* implied? Define honor as taught in a college and honor as taught in the business world. Can a State University afford to maintain the kind of honor that forces it to "remain loyal to unpopular causes and painful truths"? Is the honor that seeks "to maintain faith even with the devil" foolish? Write a report on the state of honor in your college or university such as Washington or Lincoln would have written after investigating conditions in the student politics of the institution, or conditions in examinations and quizzes.

Honor, perhaps because it is associated in the public mind with old ideas of dueling and paying gambling debts, and in general with the habits, good and bad, of a privileged class, is not in high repute with a modern industrial community, where bankruptcy laws, the letter of the statute book, the current morality of an easy-going, good-natured, success-loving people, mark out a smoother path. But the business of a college is not to fit a boy for the world, but to fit him to mould the world to his ideal. Honor is not necessarily old-fashioned and antiquated; it will adapt itself to the present and to the future. If it is arbitrary, or at least has an arbitrary element, so are most codes of law. If honor belongs to a privileged class, it is because it makes a privileged class; a body of men whose privilege it is to speak out in the scorn of consequence, to keep an oath to their own hurt, to remain loyal to unpopular causes and painful truths, to maintain faith even with the devil, and not swerve for rewards, prizes, popularity, or any of the blandishments of success. Because it is arbitrary, because it has rules, it needs to be taught. To teach a code of honor is one of the main purposes of education; a college cannot say, "We teach academic studies," and throw the responsibility for honor on parents, on preliminary schools, on undergraduate opinion, on each boy's conscience. Honor is taught by the companionship, the standards, the ideals, the talk, the actions of honorable men; it is taught by honoring honorable failure and turning the back on all manner of dishonorable success.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henry Dwight Sedgwick: *The New American Type*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

**XIV.** Define, by showing the origin, any of the following:

Highway Engineering, The County Agricultural Adviser, Customs Officer, A private secretary, The linotype machine, National public opinion, The Federal Reserve Board, The "Spoils System," The American Federation of Labor, American "Moral Leadership" in 1918, The Caste System, The mechanical stoker, The canal lock, The trial balance sheet, The Babcock Test.

**XV.** Are the following statements true definitions? Wherein does their worth consist? What causes any weakness that they may have?

1. Life is one long process of getting tired.
2. Life is the distribution of an error — or errors.
3. Life is eight parts cards and two parts play; the unseen world is made manifest to us in the play.
4. Life is the art of drawing sufficient conclusions from insufficient premises.
5. The body is but a pair of pincers set over a bellows and a stewpan and the whole fixed upon stilts.
6. Morality is the custom of one's country and the current feeling of one's peers. Cannibalism is moral in a cannibal country.
7. Heaven is the work of the best and kindest men and women. Hell is the work of prigs, pedants and professional truth-tellers.
8. The world is an attempt to make the best of both.
9. Going to your doctor is having such a row with your cells that you refer them to your solicitor. Sometimes you, as it were, strike against them and stop their food, when they go on strike against yourself. Sometimes you file a bill in chancery against them and go to bed.<sup>1</sup>

**XVI.** In the light of the following definition of *Superiority of Status* write a definition of any of the following: Superiority of birth, Superiority of training, Superiority of vitality, Superiority of environment, Superiority of patronage.

There is another sort of artificial superiority which also returns an artificial rent: the superiority of pure status. What are called "superiors" are just as necessary in social organization as a keystone is in an arch; but the keystone is made of no better material than any other parts of a bridge; its importance is conferred upon it by its position, not its position by its importance. If half-a-dozen men are cast adrift in a sailing-boat, they will need a captain. It seems simple enough for them to choose the ablest man; but there may easily be no ablest man. The whole six, or four out of the six, or two out of the six, may be apparently equally fit for the post. In that case, the captain must be elected by lot; but the moment he assumes his authority, that authority

<sup>1</sup> All these are from *The Note-Books of Samuel Butler*, published by A. C. Fifield, London.

makes him at once literally the ablest man in the boat. He has the powers which the other five have given him for their own good. Take another instance. Napoleon gained the command of the French army because he was the ablest general in France. But suppose every individual in the French army had been a Napoleon also! None the less a commander-in-chief, with his whole hierarchy of subalterns, would have had to be appointed — by lot if you like — and here, again, from the moment the lot was cast, the particular Napoleon who drew the straw for the commander-in-chief would have been the great, the all-powerful Napoleon, much more able than the Napoleons who were corporals and privates. After a year, the difference in ability between the men who had been doing nothing but sentry duty, under no strain of responsibility, and the man who had been commanding the army would have been enormous. As "the defenders of the system of Conservatism" well know, we have for centuries made able men out of ordinary ones by allowing them to inherit exceptional power and status; and the success of the plan in the phase of social development to which it was proper was due to the fact that, provided the favored man was really an ordinary man, and not a duffer, the extraordinary power conferred on him did effectually create extraordinary ability as compared with that of an agricultural laborer, for example, of equal natural endowments. The gentleman, the lord, the king, all discharging social functions of which the laborer is incapable, are products as artificial as queen bees. Their superiority is produced by giving them a superior status, just as the inferiority of the laborer is produced by giving him an inferior status. But the superior income which is the appanage of superior status is not rent of ability. It is a payment made to a man to exercise normal ability, in an abnormal situation. Rent of ability is what a man gets by exercising abnormal ability in a normal situation.<sup>1</sup>

- XVII. In the following selection how many definitions occur, or how many things are defined? Do you understand what the author says? How many words do you have to look up in the dictionary before you understand the article? Could the author have made the subject clear in a sensible extent of space?

What would you say is the chief virtue of the selection? How is it gained? For what kind of audience was the article written? What was the author's controlling purpose? Point out how he attains it.

Do you find any *pattern-designers* among novelists, poets, architects, landscape gardeners? Name a novel, a poem, a building, a

<sup>1</sup> George Bernard Shaw: *Socialism and Superior Brains*. By courtesy of the publishers, John Lane Company.

park, which is primarily a pattern-design. Name one which is not a pattern-design so much as a dramatic expression. Which is the more significant? Which is more difficult to make?

Define: Futurist painting, Free verse, Social morality, in relation to their preceding forms. Explain, through definition, the controversy between Paganism and Christianity, between Monarchy and Democracy, between Classical Education and Industrial Education, between Party Politics and Independent Politics, between Established Religion and Non-Conformist Views.

Music is like drawing, in that it can be purely decorative, or purely dramatic, or anything between the two. . . . You can compose a graceful, symmetrical sound-pattern that exists solely for the sake of its own grace and symmetry. Or you can compose music to heighten the expression of human emotion; and such music will be intensely affecting in the presence of that emotion, and utter nonsense apart from it. For examples of pure pattern-designing in music I should have to go back to the old music of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries . . . designed to affect the hearer solely by its beauty of sound and grace and ingenuity of pattern; absolute music, represented to-day in the formal sonata and symphony. . . .

The first modern dramatic composers accepted as binding the rules of good pattern-designing in sound; and this absurdity was made to appear practicable from the fact that Mozart had such an extraordinary command of his art that his operas contain numbers which, though they seem to follow the dramatic play of emotion and character, without reference to any other consideration whatever, are seen, upon examining them from the point of view of the absolute musician, to be perfectly symmetrical sound-patterns. . . . Even Mozart himself broke away in all directions, and was violently attacked by his contemporaries for doing so, the accusations levelled at him being exactly those with which the opponents of Wagner so often pester ourselves. Wagner completed the emancipation of the dramatic musician from these laws of pattern-designing; and we now have operas, and very good ones, too, written by composers not musicians in the old sense at all: that is, they are not pattern-designers; they do not compose music apart from drama.

The dramatic development also touched purely instrumental music. Liszt tried hard to extricate himself from pianoforte arabesques, and become a tone poet like his friend Wagner. He wanted his symphonic poems to express emotions and their development. And he defined the emotion by connecting it with some known story, poem, or even picture: Mazeppa, Victor Hugo's *Les Preludes*, Kaulbach's *Die Hunnenschlacht*, or the

like. But the moment you try to make an instrumental composition follow a story, you are forced to abandon the decorative pattern forms, since all patterns consist of some form which is repeated over and over again, and which generally consists in itself of a repetition of two similar halves. For example, if you take a playing-card (say the five of diamonds) as a simple example of pattern, you find not only that the diamond pattern is repeated five times, but that each established form of a symphony is essentially a pattern form involving just such symmetrical repetitions; and, since a story does not repeat itself, but pursues a continuous chain of fresh incident and correspondingly varied emotions, Liszt invented the symphonic poem, a perfectly simple and fitting common-sense form for his purpose, and one which makes *Les Preludes* much plainer sailing for the ordinary hearer than Mendelssohn's *Melusine* overture or Raff's *Lenore* or *Im Walde* symphonies, in both of which the formal repetitions would stamp Raff as a madman if we did not know that they were mere superstitions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Bernard Shaw: *The Savity of Art*, "Wagnerism." By courtesy of the publishers, Boni & Liveright.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

SUPPOSE that the president of a railroad asked you to report on the feasibility of a proposed line through a range of hills; or that you found it necessary to prove to an over-conservative farmer that he should erect a hollow-tile silo at once; or that your duty as chairman of the town playground committee led you to examine an empty lot for its possibilities; or that, as an expert in finance, you were trying to learn the cause of the deficit in a country club's accounts. In the first case you would examine the proposed route for its practicability, would estimate the grades to be reduced, would look into the question of drainage, would consider the possibility of landslides, would survey the quality of the road-bed: all with a view to making a complete report on the practicability of the route proposed. In the other cases you would determine the conditions in general that you confronted, would answer the questions: what is the value of a hollow-tile silo? why is this site suitable for a playground? what is wrong with the finances of this club? Such tasks as these occur in life all the time; in college they confront one whenever an inconsiderate instructor asks for a term paper on, say, "Conditions in New York that Made the Tweed Ring Possible," or "The Influence of the Great War on Dyestuffs," or "Tennyson's Early Training as an Influence on his Poetry," or some other subject. In every one of these cases the writer who attempts to answer the questions involved is writing analysis, for *Analysis is the breaking up of a subject into its component parts, seeing of what it is composed.*

In every such case you would wish, first of all, to tell the

truth. Of what use would your analysis be if you incorrectly estimated the drainage of the proposed railway route and the company had to expend thousands of dollars in fighting improper seepage? Unless the analysis was accurate, it would be useless or worse. But suppose that you told the truth about the site for the playground, its central position, its wealth of shade, its proper soil conditions, and yet forgot to take into account the sluggish, noisome stream that flowed on one side of the plot and bred disease? Your report would be valueless because it would be, in a vital point, quite lacking. In other words, it would be incomplete. For practical purposes it would therefore, of course, be untrue.

If you wish to write an analysis, then, your path is straight, and it leads between the two virtues of truth and thoroughness. Your catechism should be: Have I hugged my fact close and told the truth about it?, and, Have I really covered the ground?

The question of truth enters into every analysis; none may falsify. Completeness, on the other hand, is a more relative matter. In the report of a tariff commission it is essential; all the ground must be covered. In a thorough survey of Beethoven's music no sonata or quartette may be omitted. In determining the causes of an epidemic no clue is to be left unexamined until all possibilities have been exhausted. In the case of the term paper mentioned above, on the other hand, "Tennyson's Early Training as an Influence on his Poetry," not everything in his early life can be considered in anything short of a volume. In such a case you may well be puzzled what to do until you are suddenly cheered by the thought that your task is primarily one of interpretation, that what you are seeking is the *spirit* of the *training*. There would seem, therefore, to be various degrees of completeness in analysis. On the basis of completeness, then, we may divide analysis into the two classes of the *Formal* and the *Informal*.

### The Two Classes of Analysis

Formal analysis is sometimes called *logical analysis* — that is, complete, as in the report of a tariff commission — because it continues its splitting into subheadings until the demands of the thought are entirely satisfied. Such thorough meeting of all demands might well occur in an analysis of trades-unions, or methods of heating houses, or such subjects. Informal analysis, on the other hand, which is sometimes called *literary analysis*, does not attempt to be so thorough, but aims rather at giving the core of the subject, at making the spirit of it clear to the reader. For example, Mr. P. E. More in an essay on Tennyson, which is primarily an informal analysis, makes one main point, that "Tennyson was the Victorian Age." This he divides into three headings: (1) Tennyson was humanly loved by the great Victorians; (2) Tennyson was the poet of compromise; (3) Tennyson was the poet of insight. Now in these three points Mr. More has not said all that he could say, in fact he has omitted many things that from some angle would be important, but he has said those things truthfully that are needed for a proper interpretation of the subject, for a sufficient illumination of it, for showing its spirit. It is, therefore, a piece of informal analysis.

The two examples which follow illustrate formal and informal analysis, the first one classifying rock drills thoroughly, and the second very informally discussing some odds against Shakespeare.

Hammer drills may be classed under several heads, as follows: (1) Those mounted on a cradle like a piston drill and fed forward by a screw; (2) those used and held in the hand; and (3) those used and mounted on an air-fed arrangement. The last two classes are often interchangeable.

Mr. Leyner, though now making drills of the latter classes, was the pioneer of the large 8-inch diameter piston machine to be

worked in competition with large piston drills. The smaller Leyner Rock Terrier drill was brought out for stopping and driving; it could not, apparently, compete with machines of other classes.

When the drills are thus divided we have:

1. Cradle drills — Leyner, Leyner Rock Terrier, Stephens Imperial hammer drills and the Kimber.

2. Drills used only with air feed — Gordon drill and the large sizes of the Murphy, Little Wonder, and others.

3. Drills used held in the hand or with air feed — Murphy, Flottman, Cleveland, Little Wonder, Shaw, Hardy Nipper, Sinclair, Sullivan, Little Jap, Little Imp, Traylor, and others. Again, they may be divided into those that are valveless, with the differential piston or hammer itself acting as a valve. The Murphy, Sinclair, Little Wonder, Shaw, Little Imp, Leyner Rock Terrier, and Kimber drills belong to this class. The large Leyner drill is worked by a spool valve resembling that of the Slugger drill; the Flottman by a ball valve; the Little Jap by an axial valve; the Gordon drill, by a spool valve set at one end of the cylinder at right angles to it; the Waugh and Sullivan drills by spool valves set in the same axial line as the cylinder; the Hardy Nipper, and the Stephens Imperial hammer drills by an air-moving slide-valve set midway on the side of the cylinder; the Cleveland by a spool set towards the rear of the cylinder.

They may again be divided into those drills in which the piston hammer delivers its blow on the end of the steel itself. A collar is placed on the drill to prevent its entering the cylinder. The other class has an anvil block or striking pin. This anvil block fits into the end of the cylinder between the piston and the steel. It receives and transmits the blow, and also prevents the drill end from entering the cylinder.<sup>1</sup>

Powerful among the enemies of Shakespeare are the commentator and the elocutionist; the commentator because, not knowing Shakespeare's language, he sharpens his faculties to examine propositions advanced by an eminent lecturer from the Midlands, in-

<sup>1</sup> Eustace M. Weston: *Rock Drills*. By courtesy of the publishers, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. Copyright.

stead of sensitizing his artistic faculty to receive the impression of moods and inflexions of being conveyed by word-music; the elocutionist because he is a born fool, in which capacity, observing with pain that poets have a weakness for imparting to their dramatic dialog a quality which he describes and deplores as "sing-song," he devotes his life to the art of breaking up verse in such a way as to make it sound like insanely pompous prose. The effect of this on Shakespeare's earlier verse, which is full of the naïve delight of pure oscillation, to be enjoyed as an Italian enjoys a barcarolle, or a child a swing, or a baby a rocking-cradle, is destructively stupid. In the later plays, where the barcarolle measure has evolved into much more varied and complex rhythms, it does not matter so much, since the work is no longer simple enough for a fool to pick to pieces. But in every play from *Love's Labour's Lost* to *Henry V*, the elocutionist meddles simply as a murderer, and ought to be dealt with as such without benefit of clergy. To our young people studying for the stage I say, with all solemnity, learn how to pronounce the English alphabet clearly and beautifully from some person who is at once an artist and a phonetic expert. And then leave blank verse patiently alone until you have experienced emotion deep enough to crave for poetic expression, at which point verse will seem an absolutely natural and real form of speech to you. Meanwhile, if any pedant, with an uncultivated heart and a theoretic ear, proposes to teach you to recite, send instantly for the police.<sup>1</sup>

Analyses are to be divided also upon the basis of whether the subject is an individual or a group of individuals, that is, whether the subject is, for example, the quality of patriotism, which is to be analyzed into its components, or, in the second place, shade trees, which are to be grouped into the classes which together constitute such trees. Of these two kinds of analysis we call the first *Partition* and the second *Classification*. The logical process is the same in the two cases, in that it divides the subject; the difference lies in the fact that in the first case the subject is always single,

<sup>1</sup> George Bernard Shaw: *Dramatic Opinions and Essays*. Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd., London, publishers.

though it may of course be complicated, and in the second it is always plural, and may contain a very large number of individuals, as for example the human race — all the billions of all the ages gone and yet to come.

In this treatment of analysis you will find the main divisions made on the basis of formality and the matter of single or plural subject treated under each of the other headings.

### Formal Analysis

Formal analysis, which requires completeness of division, — which is not well done until every individual case is accounted for, or, in Partition, every quality or factor or part, — is found in reports to corporations, in estimates of conditions for some society, in government documents, in textbooks, and in other kinds of writing where detailed and complete information is necessary for judgment. A report to the city of Chicago on the subject of the smoke nuisance will be valuable largely as it entirely covers the ground, discovers all the conditions that the city has to face. Such a report will be primarily a partition of the question, though it may employ classification of various like situations or conditions. Likewise an account of the game birds of North America will be a formal analysis only if every kind of game bird is given a place in the account. The object of formal classification and partition is to give information, to array facts completely. The following classification of oriental rugs, which in its course also employs definition, or a close approach to it, will be finally sufficient only if no rug can be found which is not included within the classes named. The partition of the character of Queen Elizabeth will be of lasting value as formal partition only if it really accounts for the total character of the subject. That it makes only two main divisions is in no way indicative of its completeness; the question is merely, are all the qualities included under those two headings?

It is a common impression that oriental rugs are as difficult to know as the 320,000 specimens of plants, and the 20,000,000 forms of animal life that Herbert Spencer advised for the teaching of boys. This impression is wrong. There are only six groups or families of oriental rugs, and less than fifty common kinds. The novice can learn to distinguish the six families in sixty minutes. He would confuse them occasionally on so short acquaintance, but a college examiner would give him a passing grade.

Persian rugs are the rugs that are profusely decorated with a great variety of flowers, leaves, vines, and occasional birds and animals, woven free hand, with purely decorative intent. India rugs are those in which flowers, leaves, vines, and occasional animals are woven as they appear in nature. Early Indian weavers transcribed flowers to rugs as if they were botanists; modern Indian weavers are copyists of Persian patterns and their copies are plainly not originals.

In broad generalization, therefore, the two families of oriental rugs that are decorated almost exclusively with flowers have distinct styles that render their identification comparatively easy.

The Turkoman and Caucasian families of oriental rugs also pair off by themselves. They are the rugs of almost pure geometric linear design. Turkoman rugs, comprising the products of Turkestan, Bokhara, Afghanistan, and Beluchistan, are red rugs with web or open ends, woven in the patterns of the kindergarten — squares, diamonds, octagons, etc. That wild tribes should dye their wools in the shades of blood and weave the designs of childhood is fitting and logical.

Caucasian rugs differ from Turkoman rugs in being dyed in other colors than blood red, in omitting the apron ends, and in being more crowded, elaborate, and pretentious in geometric linear pattern. The Caucasian weaver's distinction as the oriental cartoonist, the expert in wooden men, women, and animals, is well deserved. He holds the oriental rug patent on Noah's ark designs. Incidentally Mount Ararat and Noah's grave, "shown" near Nakhitchevan, are located on the southern border of his country.

Chinese and Turkish rugs pair off almost as logically as the other rug families, although they are totally unlike in appearance. They contain both geometric linear and floral designs; the designs of the

very early rugs of both groups generally are geometric, and the later ones floral. But these facts are not identifying.

Chinese rugs can be recognized instantly by their colors, which are determined by their backgrounds, the reverse of the Persian method, which is to make the design the principal color medium. The Chinese colors are probably best described as the lighter and softer colors of silk — dull yellows, rose, salmon red, browns, and tans, the design usually being blue. The Chinese were the original manufacturers and dyers of silk, and they applied their silk dyes to their rugs.

Turkish rugs that are ornamented with flowers and leaves can be distinguished from Persian and Indian products by the ruler-drawn character of their patterns. A keen observer describes them as quasi-botanical forms angularly treated. Turkish rugs that contain the patterns common to the Caucasian and Turkoman families can be recognized by their brighter, sharper, and more contrasting colors. The key to the identification of this most difficult rug family is to be found in the Turkish prayer rugs. To know Turkish rugs, one must see many of them; to know the other families one need see only a few.

Reduced to a minimum statement, the identification of the six oriental rug families amounts to this:

Persian rugs — floral designs drawn free hand.

India rugs — floral designs photographed and copied.

Turkoman rugs — geometric linear design, blood red, web ends.

Caucasian rugs — geometric linear designs, numerous blended colors.

Chinese rugs — floral and geometric linear designs, silk colors.

Turkish rugs — floral designs, angular, ruled; and geometrical designs, bright contrasting colors.

To be able to identify an oriental rug as a particular kind of Persian, Indian, Turkish, Turkoman, Caucasian or Chinese weaving is somewhat more of an accomplishment. The way to begin is to study first the rugs that have distinct or fairly constant characteristics. Take Persian rugs, for example:

Bijar — rugs as thick as two or even three ordinary rugs.

Fereghan — small leaf design, usually with green border.

Gorevan or Serapi — huge medallions, strong reds and blues.

Herat or Ispahan — intricate, stately design on claret ground.  
Hamadan — a camel hair rug.  
Kashan — dark, rich, closely patterned, extremely finely woven.  
Kermanshah — the "parlor" rug, soft cream, rose, and blue.  
Khorassan — plum colored, small leaf design, long, soft, wool.  
Kurd — colored yarn run through the end web.  
Meshed — soft rose and blue with silver cast.  
Polonaise — delicately colored antique silk rug.  
Saraband — palm leaf or India shawl design on rose or blue ground.

Sehna — closest woven small rug, minute pattern.  
Shiraz — limp rug, the sides overcast with yarns of various colors.  
Tabriz — reddish yellow, the design sometimes resembling a baseball diamond.

To extend this list would make wearisome reading. Let it suffice to indicate that many oriental rugs, like people, have marked facial distinctions, and that many others have marked peculiarities of body and finish, that make them easy to recognize. Ease of naming, however, ceases with distinct markings, and rugs that are out-and-out hybrids, the cross-bred products of wars, migrations, and trade, are not named, but attributed.

Hybrid oriental rugs — the bane of the novice and the joy of the collector — are largely an epitome of the wars of Asia. Cyrus the Great, heading a host of Persians, conquered the Babylonians 500 years before Christ. Of course the Babylonians became interested in Persian rugs and appropriated some of their patterns. Two hundred years later Alexander the Great invaded Asia and conquered it, except the distant provinces of India and China. The Mohammedan Arabs mastered the Persians in the East and the Spaniards in the West in the sixth century. Genghis Khan, out of China with warriors as numerous as locusts, made a single nation of Central Asia in the thirteenth century; and Tamerlane later made subject farther dominions. Even 200 years ago the Afghans conquered the Persians; and as recently as 1771, 600,000 Tartars fled from eastern Russia to the frontiers of China under conditions to make DeQuincey's essay, "Revolt of the Tartars," a contribution to rug literature.

The wonder is not, therefore, that Chinese patterns are found in Turkestan, Persian, and Turkish rugs; that Persian patterns are found in Indian, Caucasian and Turkish rugs; that Turkish-Mohammedan patterns reach from Spain to China; and that European designs are found wherever oriental invention bent the knee to imitation. The wonder is rather that there are so many oriental rugs with distinct or fairly constant characteristics.<sup>1</sup>

She was at once the daughter of Henry and of Anne Boleyn. From her father she inherited her frank and hearty address, her love of popularity and of free intercourse with the people, her dauntless courage and her amazing self-confidence. Her harsh, manlike voice, her impetuous will, her pride, her furious outbursts of anger, came to her with her Tudor blood. She rated great nobles as if they were school-boys; she met the insolence of Essex with a box on the ear; she would break now and then into the gravest deliberations to swear at her ministers like a fishwife. But strangely in contrast with the violent outlines of her Tudor temper stood the sensuous, self-indulgent nature she derived from Anne Boleyn. Splendour and pleasure were with Elizabeth the very air she breathed. Her delight was to move in perpetual progresses from castle to castle through a series of gorgeous pageants, fanciful and extravagant as a caliph's dream. She loved gaiety and laughter and wit. A happy retort or a finished compliment never failed to win her favour. She hoarded jewels. Her dresses were innumerable. Her vanity remained, even to old age, the vanity of a coquette in her teens. No adulation was too fulsome for her, no flattery of her beauty too gross. "To see her was Heaven," Hatton told her, "the lack of her was hell." She would play with her rings that her courtiers might note the delicacy of her hands; or dance a coranto that the French Ambassador, hidden dexterously behind a curtain, might report her sprightliness to his master. Her levity, her frivolous laughter, her unwomanly jests, gave colour to a thousand scandals. Her character, in fact, like her portrait, was utterly without shade. Of womanly reserve or self-restraint she knew nothing. No instinct of delicacy veiled the

<sup>1</sup> Arthur U. Dilley: "Oriental Rugs," in *The New Country Life*, November, 1917. By courtesy of the publishers, Doubleday, Page & Co.

voluptuous temper which had broken out in the romps of her girl-hood and showed itself almost ostentatiously throughout her later life. Personal beauty in a man was a sure passport to her liking. She patted handsome young squires on the neck when they knelt to kiss her hand, and fondled her "sweet Robin," Lord Leicester, in the face of the court.<sup>1</sup>

### Informal Analysis

The formal analyses are in general far less frequent than the informal, which are found constantly in the weekly and monthly magazines and in the editorials of our daily papers. These analyses aim at giving the core of the subject, the gist of the matter, with sufficient important facts or points as background. Thus you will read an account of our relations with Mexico during the revolution in that country. Not everything is said; only the vital things. A study of the character of Mr. Roosevelt or of Mr. Wilson, an article explaining the problems that had to be faced in the building of the Keokuk or the Shoshone dams, a treatment of the question of conscription in England — these and thousands of others flood upon us with the object of illuminating our approach to the subject, of interpreting for us the heart of the matter. Mr. More, in the essay already mentioned, says little about Tennyson's verse form, about his zeal for the tale of Arthur, about the influence upon him of the classics of Greece and Rome. Into a complete treatise these would of course enter; here Mr. More's object is not all-inclusiveness, as one should examine the Pyramids for not only their plan and size but also for their minute finish, their varying materials, their methods of jointure, and the thousand other details; rather he estimates what his subject is, as one should journey round the Pyramids, view them in general, find their significance, and discover the few essentials that make them not cathedrals, not Roman circuses,

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Green: *Short History of the English People*.

but Pyramids. In other words, interpretation is the object rather than completeness of fact.

Obviously an informal analysis must be complete as far as it goes, must be complete for its author's purpose; is not good writing if it gives only a partial interpretation which gets nowhere. It is at once apparent, then, that the controlling purpose which has been discussed at length in an earlier chapter is in informal analysis of the utmost importance. Only as it is clearly held in mind will the author know when to stop, what to choose. In formal analysis, where his object is to say all that there is to say, he chooses and ceases to choose by the standard of completeness of fact; in informal analysis he must choose and cease to choose by the standard of whether he has accomplished the desired effect, made the desired interpretation. His analysis, therefore, is valuable only when he has chosen the proper interpretation and has made it effective and clear. If he wishes to analyze a period of history for the purpose of showing the romance of the period, he will choose and cease to choose largely in so far as his material helps to establish the romance, and he will not hesitate to neglect many a fact that would be otherwise important. In the following selection from George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss* you will find an analysis of the effect of the Rhone scenery on the author written purposely with the intention of driving home the dreariness of the subject, and therefore with material chosen for that end:

Journeying down the Rhone on a summer's day, you have perhaps felt the sunshine made dreary by those ruined villages which stud the banks in certain parts of its course, telling how the swift river once rose, like an angry, destroying god, sweeping down the feeble generations whose breath is in their nostrils, and making their dwellings a desolation. Strange contrast, you may have thought, between the effect produced on us by these dismal remnants of commonplace houses, which in their best days were but

the sign of a sordid life, belonging in all its details to our own vulgar era; and the effect produced by those ruins on the castled Rhine, which have crumbled and mellowed into such harmony with the green and rocky steeps, that they seem to have a natural fitness, like the mountain-pine; nay, even in the day when they were built they must have had this fitness, as if they had been raised by an earth-born race, who had inherited from their mighty parent a sublime instinct of form. And that was a day of romance! If these robber barons were somewhat grim and drunken ogres, they had a certain grandeur of the wild beast in them — they were forest boars with tusks, tearing and rending: not the ordinary domestic grunter; they represented the demon forces forever in collision with beauty, virtue, and the gentle uses of life; they made a fine contrast in the picture with the wandering minstrel, the soft-lipped princess, the pious recluse, and the timid Israelite. That was a time of color, when the sunlight fell on glancing steel and floating banners; a time of adventure and fierce struggle — nay, of living, religious art and religious enthusiasm; for were not cathedrals built in those days, and did not great emperors leave their Western palaces to die before the infidel strongholds in the sacred East? Therefore it is that these Rhine castles thrill me with a sense of poetry: they belong to the grand historic life of humanity, and raise up for me the vision of an epoch. But these dead-tinted, hollow-eyed, angular skeletons of villages on the Rhone oppress me with the feeling that human life — very much of it — is a narrow, ugly, grovelling existence, which even calamity does not elevate, but rather tends to exhibit in all its bare vulgarity of conception; and I have a cruel conviction that the lives these ruins are the traces of were part of a gross sum of obscure vitality, that will be swept into the same oblivion with the generations of ants and beavers.<sup>1</sup>

Informal analysis is not only less complete, but also less strict in adherence to pure analysis alone. It employs whatever is of value, believing that the material, the message, is greater than the form. Outside really formal analysis, which is likely to be fairly dull to all except those who are eager for the particular information given, most

<sup>1</sup> George Eliot: *Mill on the Floss*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

analytical articles make free use of definition whenever it will serve well to aid the reader's understanding or to move his emotions toward a desired goal; of description if it, like definition, proves of value; even of anecdote and argument if these forms are the fittest instruments for the fight. Thus Hawthorne, analyzing English weather, does not hesitate to dress out his analysis in the charms of personal experience and anecdote and description, which in no way obscure the facts of the weather, but merely take away the baldness of a formal statement and add the relish of actual life.

One chief condition of my enjoyment was the weather. Italy has nothing like it, nor America. There never was such weather except in England, where, in requital of a vast amount of horrible east wind between February and June, and a brown October and black November, and a wet, chill, sunless winter, there are a few weeks of incomparable summer scattered through July and August, and the earlier portion of September, small in quantity, but exquisite enough to atone for the whole year's atmospherical delinquencies. After all, the prevalent sombreness may have brought out those sunny intervals in such high relief that I see them, in my recollection, brighter than they really were: a little light makes a glory for people who live habitually in a gray gloom. The English, however, do not seem to know how enjoyable the momentary gleams of their summer are; they call it broiling weather, and hurry to the seaside with red, perspiring faces, in a state of combustion and deliquescence; and I have observed that even their cattle have similar susceptibilities, seeking the deepest shade, or standing midleg deep in pools and streams to cool themselves, at temperatures which our own cows would deem little more than barely comfortable. To myself, after the summer heats of my native land had somewhat effervesced out of my blood and memory, it was the weather of Paradise itself. It might be a little too warm; but it was that modest and inestimable superabundance which constitutes a bounty of Providence, instead of just a niggardly enough. During my first year in England, residing in perhaps the most ungenial part of the kingdom, I could never be quite comfortable

without a fire on the hearth; in the second twelvemonth, beginning to get acclimatized, I became sensible of an austere friendliness, shy, but sometimes almost tender, in the veiled, shadowy, seldom smiling summer; and in the succeeding years, — whether that I had renewed my fibre with English beef and replenished my blood with English ale, or whatever were the cause, — I grew content with winter and especially in love with summer, desiring little more for happiness than merely to breathe and bask. At the midsummer which we are now speaking of, I must needs confess that the noon tide sun came down more fervently than I found altogether tolerable; so that I was fain to shift my position with the shadow of the shrubbery, making myself a movable index of a sundial that reckoned up the hours of an almost interminable day.

For each day seemed endless, though never wearisome. As far as your actual experience is concerned, the English summer day has positively no beginning and no end. When you awake, at any reasonable hour, the sun is already shining through the curtains; you live through unnumbered hours of Sabbath quietude, with a calm variety of incident softly etched upon their tranquil lapse; and at length you become conscious that it is bedtime again, while there is still enough daylight in the sky to make the pages of your book distinctly legible. Night, if there be any such season, hangs down a transparent veil through which the bygone day beholds its successor; or, if not quite true of the latitude of London, it may be soberly affirmed of the more northern parts of the island, that To-morrow is born before its Yesterday is dead. They exist together in the golden twilight, where the decrepit old day dimly discerns the face of the ominous infant; and you, though a mere mortal, may simultaneously touch them both with one finger of recollection and another of prophecy. I cared not how long the day might be, nor how many of them. I had earned this repose by a long course of irksome toil and perturbation, and could have been content never to stray out of the limits of that suburban villa and its garden. If I lacked anything beyond, it would have satisfied me well enough to dream about it, instead of struggling for its actual possession. At least, this was the feeling of the moment; although the transitory, flitting, and irresponsible character of my life there was perhaps the most enjoyable element of all, as allowing

me much of the comfort of house and home, without any sense of their weight upon my back. The nomadic life has great advantages, if we can find tents ready pitched for us at every stage.<sup>1</sup>

An extension of this willingness to make grist of whatever comes to the writer's mill lies in the close approach, at times, that analysis makes to the informal essay. Of course the line is difficult to draw — and perhaps not necessarily drawn — and most informal essays are to some extent, at least, analytical. The more you desire your analysis to become interesting, the more you wish to take hold of your reader, the more you will make use of the close approach unless your subject and its facts are of a kind to repel such intimacy. An analysis of the nebular hypothesis deals with facts of so august a nature, on so nearly an unimaginable plane, that intimacy seems out of place, impudent, like levity in cathedrals. But if you have such a subject as George Gissing<sup>2</sup> chose in the following analysis of the sports-woman's attitude and character, you may well, as he did, throw aside the formalities of expression and at once make truce of intimacy with your reader. So long as you do not obscure the facts of the analysis, make it unclear or blurred, so long you are safe.

I found an article, by a woman, on "Lion Hunting," and in this article I came upon a passage which seemed worth copying:

"As I woke my husband, the lion — which was then about forty yards off — charged straight towards us, and with my .303 I hit him full in the chest, as we afterwards discovered, tearing his wind-pipe to pieces and breaking his spine. He charged a second time, and the next shot hit him through the shoulder, tearing his heart to ribbons."

It would interest me to look upon this heroine of gun and pen. She is presumably quite a young woman; probably, when at home,

<sup>1</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne: *Our Old Home*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> George Gissing: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, "Spring." By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

a graceful figure in drawing-rooms. I should like to hear her talk, to exchange thoughts with her. She would give one a very good idea of the matron of old Rome who had her seat in the amphitheatre. Many of those ladies, in private life, must have been bright and gracious, highbred and full of agreeable sentiment; they talked of art and of letters; they could drop a tear over Lesbia's sparrow; at the same time, they were connoisseurs in torn wind-pipes, shattered spines, and viscera rent open. It is not likely that many of them would have cared to turn their own hands to butchery, and, for the matter of that, I must suppose that our Lion Huntress of the popular magazine is rather an exceptional dame; but no doubt she and the Roman ladies would get on well together, finding only a few superficial differences. The fact that her gory reminiscences are welcomed by an editor with the popular taste in view is perhaps more significant than appears either to editor or public. Were this lady to write a novel (the chances are she will) it would have the true note of modern vigour. Of course her style has been formed by her favourite reading; more than probably, her ways of thinking and feeling owe much to the same source. If not so already, this will soon, I dare say, be the typical Englishwoman. Certainly, there is "no nonsense about her." Such women should breed a terrible race.

### Kinds of Informal Analysis ?

#### *a. Enumeration*

Informal analysis may appear in various forms, not all of which are at once apparent as analysis until we disabuse our minds of thinking that analysis must be, always, complete in facts. For example, informal analysis often appears in the form of enumeration, in which the author "has some things to say" — always for a definite purpose — and says them in some reasonable order. Thus Mr. Herbert Croly, in his article "Lincoln as More than American," analyzes Lincoln's character as related to the characters of other Americans through the qualities of intellectuality, humanness, magnanimity, and humility. More might be said; the

analysis is not complete in fact, but it serves the purpose of the author. It is distinctly in the enumerative order, the progression being determined by the controlling purpose of delineating Lincoln as worthy of not only respect but even true awe, the awe that we give only to those great souls who, in spite of all their mental supremacy, are yet beautifully humble.

*b. Equation*

Informal analysis often appears in the form of equation: the subject of analysis is stated as equal to something else — a quality, an instrument from another field of human knowledge, the same thing in other more common or well-known words. For example, William James, in his essay "The Social Value of the College Bred," first states that the value of a college education is "to help you to know a good man when you see him," and then explains what he means by this phrase. This form of analysis, then, is usually in the nature of a double equation:  $x$  is equal to  $y$ , which, in turn, can be split up into  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ . The method really consists in arriving at an easily comprehended statement of the significance of the subject through the medium of a more immediately workable or attractive or simple synonymous statement. It is an application of the old formula of going from the known to the unknown, except that in this case we proceed from the unknown to the known and then return to the unknown with increased light.

*c. Statement of Significance*

A third form of informal analysis is the showing of the significance of the subject, its root meaning. In this case the writer attempts not so much to break the subject into its obvious parts as to set before the reader the meaning of it as a whole, in so short a compass, often, that it will not need further explanation, or if it does, that it may be then

divided after the statement in easier form has been made. The following explanation of the philosophy of Nietzsche illustrates this form of analysis:

The central motive of Nietzsche seems to me to be this. It is clear to him that the moral problem concerns the perfection, not of society, not of the masses of men, but of the great individual. And so far he, indeed, stands where the standard of individualistic revolt has so often been raised. But Nietzsche differs from other individualists in that the great object toward which his struggle is directed is the discovery of what his own individuality itself means and is. A Titan of the type of Goethe's or Shelley's Prometheus proclaims his right to be free of Zeus and of all other powers. But by hypothesis Prometheus already knows who he is and what he wants. But the problem of Nietzsche is, above all, the problem. Who am I, and, What do I want? What is clear to him is the need of strenuous activity in pressing on toward the solution of this problem. His aristocratic consciousness is the sense that common men are in no wise capable of putting or of appreciating this question. His assertion of the right of the individual to be free from all external restraints is the ardent revolt of the strenuous seeker for selfhood against whatever hinders him in this task. He will not be interrupted by the base universe in the business — his life-business — of finding out what his own life is to mean for himself. He knows that his own will is, above all, what he calls the will for power. On occasion he does not hesitate to use this power to crush, at least in ideal, whoever shall hinder him in his work. But the problem over which he agonizes is the inner problem. What does this will that seeks power genuinely desire? What is the power that is worthy to be mine?<sup>1</sup>

#### *d. Relationship*

A fourth class of informal analytical writing is the showing the relationship that exists between two ideas or things, as cause and effect, as source and termination, as contrary forces, or as any relation that has real existence. Under

<sup>1</sup> Josiah Royce: *Nietzsche*. By courtesy of The Atlantic Monthly Company.

this heading will be found the large group of articles that answer the question *why?*, as for example, "Why the Quebec Bridge Collapsed," "Causes of the Strike among the Garment Workers," "Popular Opinion as Affecting Government Action," and other such subjects. In the following analysis of the relation existing between human action as result, and impulse and desire as causes, you will find such an informal presentation of material.

All human activity springs from two sources: impulse and desire. The part played by desire has always been sufficiently recognized. When men find themselves not fully contented, and not able instantly to procure what will cause content, imagination brings before their minds the thought of things which they believe would make them happy. All desire involves an interval of time between the consciousness of a need and the opportunity for satisfying it. The acts inspired by desire may in themselves be painful, the time before satisfaction can be achieved may be very long, the object desired may be something outside our own lives, and even after our own death. Will, as a directing force, consists mainly in following desires for more or less distant objects, in spite of the painfulness of the acts involved and the solicitations of incompatible but more immediate desires and impulses. All this is familiar, and political philosophy hitherto has been almost entirely based upon desire as the source of human actions.

But desire governs no more than a part of human activity, and that not the most important but only the more conscious, explicit, and civilized part.

In all the more instinctive part of our nature we are dominated by impulses to certain kinds of activity, not by desires for certain ends. Children run and shout, not because of any good which they expect to realize, but because of a direct impulse to running and shouting. Dogs bay the moon, not because they consider that it is to their advantage to do so, but because they feel an impulse to bark. It is not any purpose, but merely an impulse, that prompts such actions, as eating, drinking, love-making, quarrelling, boasting. Those who believe that man is a rational animal will say that people boast in order that others may have a good

opinion of them; but most of us can recall occasions when we have boasted in spite of knowing that we should be despised for it. Instinctive acts normally achieve some result which is agreeable to the natural man, but they are not performed from desire for this result. They are performed from direct impulse, and the impulse often is strong even in cases in which the normal desirable result cannot follow. Grown men like to imagine themselves more rational than children and dogs, and unconsciously conceal from themselves how great a part impulse plays in their lives. This unconscious concealment always follows a certain general plan. When an impulse is not indulged in the moment in which it arises, there grows up a desire for the expected consequences of indulging the impulse. If some of the consequences which are reasonably to be expected are clearly disagreeable, a conflict between foresight and impulse arises. If the impulse is weak, foresight may conquer; this is what is called acting on reason. If the impulse is strong, either foresight will be falsified, and the disagreeable consequences will be forgotten, or, in men of heroic mold, the consequences may be recklessly accepted. When Macbeth realizes that he is doomed to defeat, he does not shrink from the fight; he exclaims:—

Lay on, Macduff,  
And damned be he that first cries, Hold, enough!

But such strength and recklessness of impulse is rare. Most men, when their impulse is strong, succeed in persuading themselves, usually by a subconscious selectiveness of attention, that agreeable consequences will follow from indulgence of their impulse. Whole philosophies, whole systems of ethical valuation, spring up in this way; they are the embodiment of a kind of thought which is subservient to impulse, which aims at providing a quasi-rational ground for the indulgence of impulse. The only thought which is genuine is that which springs out of the intellectual impulse of curiosity, leading to the desire to know and understand. But most of what passes for thought is inspired by some non-intellectual impulse, and is merely a means of persuading ourselves that we shall not be disappointed or do harm if we indulge this impulse.

When an impulse is restrained, we feel discomfort, or even violent pain. We may indulge the impulse in order to escape from

this pain, and our action is then one which has a purpose. But the pain only exists because of the impulse, and the impulse itself is directed to an act, not to escaping from the pain of restraining the impulse. The impulse itself remains without a purpose, and the purpose of escaping from pain only arises when the impulse has been momentarily restrained.

Impulse is at the basis of our activity, much more than desire. Desire has its place, but not so large a place as it is seemed to have. Impulses bring with them a whole train of subservient fictitious desires: they make men feel that they desire the results which will follow from indulging the impulses, and that they are acting for the sake of these results, when in fact their action has no motive outside itself. A man may write a book or paint a picture under the belief that he desires the praise which it will bring him; but as soon as it is finished, if his creative impulse is not exhausted, what he has done grows uninteresting to him, and he begins a new piece of work. What applies to artistic creation applies equally to all that is most vital in our lives: direct impulse is what moves us, and the desires which we think we have are a mere garment for the impulse.

Desire, as opposed to impulse, has, it is true, a large and increasing share in the regulation of men's lives. Impulse is erratic and anarchical, not easily fitted into a well-regulated system; it may be tolerated in children and artists, but it is not thought proper to men who hope to be taken seriously. Almost all paid work is done from desire, not from impulse: the work itself is more or less irksome, but the payment for it is desired. The serious activities that fill a man's working hours are, except in a few fortunate individuals, governed mainly by purposes, not by impulses toward these activities. In this hardly any one sees an evil, because the place of impulse in a satisfactory existence is not recognized.

An impulse, to one who does not share it actually or imaginatively, will always seem to be mad. All impulse is essentially blind, in the sense that it does not spring from any prevision of consequences. The man who does not share the impulse will form a different estimate as to what the consequences will be, and as to whether those that must ensue are desirable. This difference of opinion will seem to be ethical or intellectual, whereas its real basis

is a difference of impulse. No genuine agreement will be reached, in such a case, so long as the difference of impulse persists. In all men who have any vigorous life, there are strong impulses such as may seem utterly unreasonable to others. Blind impulses sometimes lead to destruction and death, but at other times they lead to the best things the world contains. Blind impulse is the source of war, but it is also the source of science, and art, and love. It is not the weakening of impulse that is to be desired, but the direction of impulse toward life and growth rather than toward death and decay.

The complete control of impulse by will, which is sometimes preached by moralists, and often enforced by economic necessity, is not really desirable. A life governed by purposes and desires, to the exclusion of impulses, is a tiring life; it exhausts vitality, and leaves a man, in the end, indifferent to the very purposes which he has been trying to achieve. When a whole nation lives in this way, the whole nation tends to become feeble, without enough grasp to recognize and overcome the obstacles to its desires. Industrialism and organization are constantly forcing civilized nations to live more and more by purpose rather than impulse. In the long run such a mode of existence, if it does not dry up the springs of life, produces new impulse, not of the kind which the will has been in the habit of controlling or of which thought is conscious. These new impulses are apt to be worse in their effects than those which have been checked. Excessive discipline, especially when it has been imposed from without, often issues in impulses of cruelty and destruction; this is one reason why militarism has a bad effect on national character. Either lack of vitality, or impulses which are oppressive and against life, will almost always result if the spontaneous impulses are not able to find an outlet. A man's impulses are not fixed from the beginning by his native disposition: within certain wide limits, they are profoundly modified by his circumstances and his way of life. The nature of these modifications ought to be studied, and the results of such study ought to be taken account of in judging the good or harm that is done by political and social institutions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand Russell: *Why Men Fight*. By courtesy of the publishers, The Century Company, New York City.

*e. Statement of a Problem*

A fifth form in which analysis often appears is as a statement of a problem. An engineer who is asked by a city to investigate the conditions that confront the municipality as regards water supply will have such a problem to state. The statement will presumably consist of several divisions. First of all, of course — and this will be essential in all such statements — will be an analysis of the conditions themselves. In this particular case he will find out how much water is needed, how great the present supply is, what sources are available for increased supply, what the character of the water in these other sources is, and anything else that may be of value to the city. If any former attempts at solution have been made, he may mention them. If he is asked to recommend a plan of procedure, he will make an analysis of the details of this plan and will present them.

Now obviously the nature of the audience will determine somewhat the manner of approach to the conditions. If, for example, the problem is to be stated to the financial committee of the city, the angle of approach will be that of cost; if to a prospective constructing engineer, from that of difficulties of construction of reservoirs or from that of availability of sources. If you are to state the problem of lessening the illiteracy in a given neighborhood, you will approach the subject for the school committee from the angle, perhaps, of the establishment of night schools, or from that of the necessary welding of nationalities; for the charitable societies from that of the poverty that compels child labor in the community. And in the recommendations for meeting the conditions, if such recommendations are made, attention must be paid to the particular people who will read the analysis. Of course if you make an abstract, complete survey, you will cover the ground in whatever way seems most suitable.

Such an analysis, when it is in the nature of a report, will presumably be in brief, tabulated form. If, on the other hand, it is not a report, the subject may be treated more informally, made more pleasing. The following statement of the problem of the development of power machinery is made rather formally from the angle of the constructive engineer with an eye also to the financial conditions.

The problem of power-machinery development is, therefore, divisible into several parts: First, what processes must be carried out to produce motion against resistance, from the energy of winds, the water of the rivers, or from fuel. Second, what combinations of simply formed parts can be made to carry out the process or series of processes. These two steps when worked out will result in some kind of engine, but it may not be a good engine, for it may use up too much natural energy for the work it does; some part may break or another wear too fast; some part may have a form that no workman can make, or use up too much material or time in the making; in short, while the engine may work, it may be too wasteful, or do its work at too great a cost of coal or water, attendance in operation, or investment, or all these together. There must, therefore, be added several other elements to the problem, as follows: Third, how many ways are there of making each part, and which is the cheapest, or what other form of part might be devised that would be cheaper to make, or what cheaper material is there that would be equally suitable. Fourth, how sensitive to care are all these parts when in operation, and how much attendance and repairs will be required to keep the machine in good operating condition. Fifth, how big must the important parts of the whole machine be to utilize all the energy available, or to produce the desired amount of power. Sixth, how much force must each part of the mechanism sustain, and how big must it be when made of suitable material so as not to break. Seventh, how much work can be produced by the process for each unit of energy supplied.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles E. Luce: *Power*. By courtesy of the publishers, the Columbia University Press.

### Principles of Analysis

The problem that confronts you, then, in either kind of analysis, however formal or informal it may be, is, How shall I go to work? The first necessity is the choosing of a basis for division of the subject, whether it be in classification or partition. The necessity for this arises from the demand of the human mind for logical consistency. Life seems often wildly inconsistent, but we demand that explanation of it or any phase of it be arranged according to what seems to us some logical law of progression, some consistent point of view. And in truth without some such law or basis the mind soon becomes hopelessly enmeshed and bewildered. I cannot expect my reader to understand my treatise on locomotive engines, my classification of them, if I regard them now as engines of speed, now as means of conveyance, now as potential destroyers of life, and now as instruments whereby capitalists become rich and workmen become poor. As often as I change my point of view, so often I shall be under the necessity of making a new arrangement of the engines, a new alignment. It is like skimming past a corn-field with the platoons of green spears constantly shifting their number, their direction, and their general appearance. If I station myself at one point, I can soon make reasonable estimates, but so long as I whirl from point to point my estimate must whirl likewise and I shall be confused rather than helped. If, then, you are to analyze, say, our present-day domestic architecture, it is not enough to heap together everything that occurs to you about houses: their size, material, color, arrangement, finish, beauty, convenience, situation as regards sidewalks, their heating and upkeep. To prevent your reader from becoming hopelessly muddled, from seeming to deal with the valley of the unorganized dry bones of fact, you must have some guiding principle, some basis, some point of view. Suppose that you take *beauty*

as your basis. Then at once you have a standard by which you can judge all houses, to which you can relate questions of position, arrangement, convenience, lighting, heating, etc. Each of these questions is now significant as affecting the cause of beauty. You could, of course, choose *convenience* as your basis, to which, then, beauty would be subordinate as contributing or opposing. Asked to analyze the architecture of a railroad terminal, you will not do well to plant dynamite under it and make an architectural rummage sale of its parts; rather you will choose, perhaps, *serviceability* as your basis, and will then examine tracks, offices, waiting rooms, etc. to see what the whole is. No part will thereby be overlooked; each will be significant, and the whole will be unified by your single point of view. An analysis of MacDowell's music might be based on *emotional power*; of the currency problem on that of *general distribution*; of universities on that of *proportion of cultural to so-called practical courses*. Notice, also, that the choosing of a basis of division is just as necessary in one kind of analysis as in another, that formality and informality do not affect the logic of the situation in the least, that whatever the subject or the proposed method of treatment, you must be consistent in your point of view, must make a pivot round which the whole can turn.

Sometimes more than one principle will be necessary, in a complicated analysis, as in judging a route for a railway we saw the necessity for considering grades, drainage, landslides, etc., as we might interweave the bases of cost, beauty, convenience, etc., but — like the reins of the ten-span circus horses — all will be found to run back finally to the single driver — in the case of the railway, *practicability*. In classifying dredges, for example, we may use as basis the action of the machine upon the bottom of the body of water, that is, whether the action is continuous or intermittent; in this case we shall find four types of continuous dredges: the

ladder, the hydraulic, the stirring, and the pneumatic; and we shall find two classes of intermittent: the dipper and the grapple dredges. Or we may divide all dredges on the basis of whether they are self-propelling or non-propelling. Finally, we may take as basis for the classification the manner of disposing of the excavated materials, in which case we shall find several groups. In the following example we have two bases used for classifying clearing-houses. The use of more than one basis will depend on whether we can by such use make more easily clear to a reader the nature of the subject and on whether different readers will need different angles of approach.

The clearing-houses in the United States may be divided into two classes, the sole function of the first of which consists in clearing-notes, drafts, checks, bills of exchange, and whatever else may be agreed upon; and the second of which, in addition to exercising the functions of the class just mentioned, prescribes rules and regulations for its members in various matters, such as the fixing of uniform rates of exchange, interest charges, collections, etc.

Clearing-houses may also be divided into two classes with reference to the funds used in the settlement of balances: First, those clearing-houses which make their settlements entirely on a cash basis, or, as stated in the decision of the Supreme Court above referred to, "by such form of acknowledgment or certificate as the associated banks may agree to use in their dealings with each other as the equivalent or representative of cash"; and second, those clearing-houses which make their settlements by checks or drafts on large financial centers.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes, also, the minor sections may have a different basis from the main one, a different principle of classification. For example, a general basis for an analysis of the Mexican situation during Mr. Wilson's administration might

<sup>1</sup> James G. Cannon: *Clearing-Houses*. By courtesy of the publishers, D. Appleton & Co., New York City. Copyright, 1900.

be *general world progress*. This might cover our immediate relations with Mexico, our less close relations with South America, and our rather more remote relations with Europe. The first division might then possibly choose for its principle *fundamental causes for inter-irritation*; the second, *our trade relations with South America*; and the third, the *possibility of trouble through the Monroe Doctrine*. All would unite under the one heading of general progress, and so long as they were kept distinct would be serviceable. For the uniting into one main principle is the important thing. It is by this, and this only, that the reader will easily receive a clear understanding of the subject.

Having selected this unifying basis, you must then be careful lest your subdivisions be only the subject restated in other words. If you are analyzing a railroad route for practicability, do not name one division *general serviceability*, for you will merely have made a revolution of 360 degrees and be facing exactly as you faced before. In analyzing Scott's works for humor do not name one division *ability to see the funny side of life*, for again you will have said only that two equals two. Each section must be less than the whole.

Even more caution is required to keep the divisions from overlapping. The man who wrote an enthusiastic account of the acting of Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson with sub-headings as follows: (1) emotional power, (2) effect on audience, (3) intellect, (4) appealing qualities, saw that his divisions — like a family of young kittens — overlapped and sprawled generally. When he had selected *moving power* as his main principle, and had then divided the treatment into the following headings: (1) appearance, (2) voice, (3) general handling of the situation, (4) effect at the time, and (5) memories of the performance, he found that his kittens had become well-mannered little beasties and sat each in his place. The overlapping of subdivisions is likely

to occur because of one or both of two causes: lack of clear thinking, and lack of clear expression. Be sure, then, first to cut neatly between parts in dividing your apple, and then to label each part carefully so that the reader will not say, "Why, three is just like two!"

Finally, be sure that the sum of your divisions equals the whole. This means that in logical analysis you must continue the process of dividing until nothing is left. You must follow the old advice: "Cut into as small pieces as possible, and then cut each piece several times smaller!" Such would be the process in analyzing and classifying types of cathedral architecture; your work will not be complete until you have included all possible forms. The same would hold true in a thorough analysis of bridges; all forms would demand entrance. When you write informal or literary analysis, on the other hand, since here the object is illumination rather than exhaustion, almost suggestiveness rather than completeness, choose the significant vital divisions and let the rest go. This does not mean that in informal analysis you may be careless; "any old thing" is far from being the motto; strict thinking and shrewd selection are quite as necessary as in formal analysis. The point is that the divisions will be fewer in number, as in an article on the subject of the failure of freshmen in the first semester your object, in informal analysis, would be to group the causes, for the convenience of the reader, into a few general divisions which should give him a clear idea of the subject without necessitating long and painful reading. In literary analysis especially it is often well to express in one sentence the gist of your thought, as Mr. More says, "Tennyson was the Victorian Age." It is always well to be able to express this sentence. Of course care must be exercised not to make the structure of the article too evident by the presence of such a sentence, but its judicious use will help to unify the thought for the reader. For most minds analysis is

difficult. Whatever you can do, therefore, to make it easy will be worth while in gaining success.

### EXERCISES

- I. Why, from the point of view of analysis, is it difficult to select a list of "the greatest ten" living men, or women? Make such a list and then examine its foundations. Is a similar list of novels or plays or symphonies as difficult to make?
- II. Use any of the following sentences as a nucleus sentence on which to build an informal analysis.
  1. The attitude of scientific efficiency is incompatible with feelings of humanity.
  2. A college career does not always develop, but in fact often kills, intellectual integrity.
  3. The worst enemy of the American Public is the newspaper that for political or business reasons distorts news.
  4. Studies are the least valuable of college activities except as they stimulate the imagination.
  5. Our Country is so large that a citizen is really justified, mentally and morally, in being provincial.
  6. The study of literature in college is, except for the person of no imagination, deadening to the spirit.
  7. The fifteen- and twenty-cent magazine is a menace to American life in that its fiction grossly distorts the facts of life.
  8. The farmer who wishes to keep his soil in good condition should use legumes as increasers of fertility.
  9. The effect of acquisition of land property is always to drive the possessors into the Tory camp.
  10. The engineer is a poet who expresses himself in material forms rather than words.
- III. Make a formal classification, in skeleton form, of any of the following subjects. Then determine what qualities the subject has that indicate how such a classification can be made interesting, either by material or treatment. Then write an analytical theme which shall thoroughly cover the skeleton classification and shall also be attractive. (Compare the classification of Rock Drills (page 115) and Oriental Rugs (page 119) to note the difference in the amount of interest.)
  1. Building materials for houses.
  2. China dinner-ware.
  3. Forms of democratic government.
  4. Methods of irrigation in the United States.
  5. Types of lyric poetry.
  6. Chairs.
  7. Commercial fertilizers.

8. Tractors for the farm.
9. Contemporary philosophies of Europe and America.
10. American dances.
11. Elevators.
12. Filing systems.
13. Races of men in Europe.
14. Gas ranges.
15. Pianos.
16. Contemporary short stories of the popular magazines.

Indicate, in any given subject, how many possible bases for classification you could choose, as, for example, you might classify chairs on the basis of comfort, expense, presence of rockers, upholstery, adaptation to the human figure, material for the seat, shape of back, etc.

- IV. Analyze any of the following problems, first without recommendation of solution, and second with recommendation as if you were making a report to a committee or employer or officer.

1. Summer work for college students.
2. Keeping informed of world affairs while doing one's college work faithfully.
3. "Outside activities" for college students.
4. Faculty or non-faculty control of college politics.
5. Choosing a college course with relation to intended career in life.
6. Selecting shrubbery for continuous bloom with both red and blue berries in winter.
7. The mail-order houses.
8. Preventing money panics.
9. Dye-manufacture in the United States.
10. Gaining foreign markets.
11. The farmer and the commission merchant.
12. The brand of flour selected for use in large hotels.
13. Color photography.
14. Wind pressure in high buildings.
15. Street pavement.
16. Electrification of railroads.
17. Heating system for an eight-room house.
18. Choice of cereal for children of six, nine, and eleven — two boys, one girl.
19. Lighting the farmhouse.
20. Creating a high class dairy or sheep herd.
21. Creating an apple (or other fruit) orchard.
22. Method of shipping potatoes to a distant point, in boxes, barrels, sacks.
23. Best use of a twenty-acre farm near a large city.
24. Investment of \$500.00.
25. Best system of bookkeeping for the farmer.
26. Kind of life insurance for a man of twenty.

27. Location of a shoe factory with capital of \$250,000.00.
  28. Cash system in a large general store.
  29. Reconciling Shakespeare's works with the known facts of his life.
  30. The secret of Thomas Hardy's pessimism.
  31. Reconciling narrow religious training with the increased knowledge derived from college.
  32. The failure of college courses in English composition to produce geniuses.
  33. The creation of a conscientious political attitude in a democracy.
  34. Selection of \$10,000 worth of books as the nucleus for a small town library.
- V. Decide upon a controlling purpose for an informal analysis of any of the following subjects, indicate how you hope to make the analysis interesting, state why you choose the basis that you do — and then write the theme.
1. Prejudices, Flirts, Entertainments, Shade-trees, Methods of advertising, Languages, Scholastic degrees, Systems of landscape gardening for small estates, Migratory song birds of North America, Laces.
  2. Causes of the Return-to-the-Soil movement, Origins of our dairy cattle, Benefits of intensive agriculture, Imported plant diseases, Legumes.
  3. Opportunities for the Civil (or Mechanical or Electrical, etc.) Engineer, Difficulties of modern bridge-building, The relation of the engineer to social movements, The contribution of the engineer to intellectual advance.
  4. Changes in the United States system of public finance since Hamilton's time, The equitable distribution of taxation, The benefits of the Federal Reserve Movement in Finance, Forms of taxation, Systems of credit.
  5. Possibilities for Physiological Chemistry, Obstacles to color photography, The chemistry of the kitchen, The future of the telescope, The battle against disease germs, Theories of the atom, Heredity in plants or animals, Edible fresh-water fish.
  6. Bores, The terrors of childhood, The vanities of young men, Methods of coquetry, — of becoming popular, — of always having one's way, The idiosyncrasies of elderly bachelors, Books to read on the train, Acquaintances of the dining-car.
- VI. Write a 250 word analysis of whatever type you choose on any of the following subjects:

The dishonesty of college catalogues, The prevalence of fires in the United States, Causes of weakness in I beams, Effect of fairy stories on children, Religious sectarianism, Public attitude toward an actress, The business man's opinion of the college professor, The tyranny of the teaching of our earliest years, The state of American forests, Municipal wastefulness, Opportunities for lucra-

tive employment at — college or university. The effect of oriental rugs in a room. The attitude of people in a small town toward their young people in college. People who are desolate without the "Movies" four or five times a week.

- VII. Write a 1500-2000 word analytical theme on any of the following subjects:

1. The Responsibilities of Individualism.
2. American Slavery to the Printed Word.
3. The Ideal Vacation.
4. What Shall We Do with Sunday?
5. The Value of Reading Fiction.
6. Why I am a Republican, or Democrat, or Pessimist, or Agnostic, or Humanist, or Rebel in general, or Agitator or — what not?
7. The Classics and the American Student in the Twentieth Century.
8. The Chief Function of a College.
9. The Decline of Manners.
10. A Defense of Cheap Vaudeville.
11. The Workingman Should Know His Place and Keep It.
12. The Study of History as an Aid to a Critical Estimate of the Present.
13. The Relation of Friendship to Similarity in Point of View.
14. Intellectual Leadership in America.
15. The Present Situation in the World of Baseball.
16. The Reaction of War upon the Finer Sensibilities of Civilians.
17. Patriotism and Intellectual Detachment.
18. The Breeding Place of Social Improvements.
19. Organization in Modern Life.
20. The Conflict of Political and Moral Loyalty.
21. Why Has Epic Poetry Passed from Favor?
22. The Stability of American Political Opinion.
23. The Shifting Geography of Intellectual Leadership in the World.

- VIII. In the following selection what does Mr. Shaw analyze? On what basis? Is he thorough? If not, what does he omit? Does the omission, if there is any, vitally harm the analysis?

Passion is the steam in the engine of all religious and moral systems. In so far as it is malevolent, the religions are malevolent too, and insist on human sacrifices, on hell, wrath, and vengeance. You cannot read Browning's Caliban upon Setebos; or, Natural Theology in the Island, without admitting that all our religions have been made as Caliban made his, and that the difference between Caliban and Prospero is not that Prospero has killed passion in himself whilst Caliban has yielded to it, but that Prospero is mastered by holier passions than Caliban's. Abstract principles

of conduct break down in practice because kindness and truth and justice are not duties founded on abstract principles external to man, but human passions, which have, in their time, conflicted with higher passions as well as with lower ones. If a young woman, in a mood of strong reaction against the preaching of duty and self-sacrifice and the rest of it, were to tell me that she was determined not to murder her own instincts and throw away her life in obedience to a mouthful of empty phrases, I should say to her: "By all means do as you propose. Try how wicked you can be: it is precisely the same experiment as trying how good you can be. At worst you will only find out the sort of person you are. At best you will find that your passions, if you really and honestly let them all loose impartially, will discipline you with a severity which your conventional friends, abandoning themselves to the mechanical routine of fashion, could not stand for a day." As a matter of fact, we have seen over and over again this comedy of the "emancipated" young enthusiast flinging duty and religion, convention and parental authority, to the winds, only to find herself, for the first time in her life, plunged into duties, responsibilities, and sacrifices from which she is often glad to retreat, after a few years' wearing down of her enthusiasm, into the comparatively loose life of an ordinary respectable woman of fashion.<sup>1</sup>

Analyze the relation of *sincerity* to *teaching*, of *intellectual bravery* to *reading*, of *subservience* to *politics*, of *vitality* to *creative writing*, of *broadmindedness* to *social reform*, of *sympathy* to *social judgment*.

Rewrite Mr. Shaw's article so as to place the sentence which now begins the selection at the end. Is the result an improvement or a drawback? What difference in the reader might make this change advisable?

- IX. In the light of the following statement of the philosophy of Mr. Arthur Balfour, the English statesman, analyze, into one word if possible, the philosophy of Lincoln, of Bismarck, of Mr. Wilson, of Robert E. Lee, of Webster, of William Pitt, of Burke, of any political thinker of whom you know.

In the same way analyze the military policy of Napoleon or Grant or any other general; the social philosophy of Jane Addams, Rousseau, Carlyle, Jefferson, or any other thinker; the creed of personal conduct of Browning, Whitman, Thackeray (as shown in *Vanity Fair*), or of any other person concerned with the individual.

Analyze the effect of such a philosophy as Mr. Balfour's. Analyze the relation of such a philosophy as this to the actively interested personal conduct of the holder of it toward definite personal ends.

<sup>1</sup> George Bernard Shaw: *The Savity of Art*. By courtesy of the publishers, Boni & Liveright.

Balfour is essentially a sceptic. He looks out on life with a mingled scorn and pity — scorn for its passionate strivings for the unattainable, pity for its meanness and squalor. He does not know the reading of the riddle, but he knows that all ends in failure and disillusion. Ever the rosy dawn of youth and hope fades away into the sadness of evening and the blackness of night, and out of that blackness comes no flash of revelation, no message of cheer.

The Worldly Hope men set their hearts upon  
Turns Ashes — or it prospers; and anon  
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face  
Lighting a little Hour or two — is gone.

Why meddle with the loom and its flying shuttle? We are the warp and weft with which the great Weaver works His infinite design — that design which is beyond the focus of all mortal vision, and in which the glory of Greece, the pomp of Rome, the ambition of Carthage, seven times buried beneath the dust of the desert, are but inscrutable passages of glowing color. All our schemes are futile, for we do not know the end, and that which seems to us evil may serve some ultimate good, and that which seems right may pave the path to wrong. In this fantastic mockery of all human effort the only attitude is the "wise passiveness" of the poet. Let us accept the irrevocable fate unresistingly.

In a word, Drift. That is the political philosophy of Mr. Balfour.<sup>1</sup>

- X.** Analyze the method of treatment that the author uses in the following selections about King Edward VII and Mr. Thomas Hardy, and in the one just quoted about Mr. Balfour. Would the result in the reader's mind be as good, or better, if the author specified a larger number of qualities? Why? What feeling do you have as to the fairness of the three treatments? Does any one of the three seem to claim completeness? Which is most nearly complete?

Write a similar analysis, reducing to one or two main qualities or characteristics, the American Civil War, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Romantic Movement in Literature, the Celtic Spirit, the Puritan Spirit, Socialism, Culture.

Now, King Edward is, above everything else, a very human man. He is not deceived by the pomp and circumstance in the midst of which it has been his lot to live, for he has no illusions. He is eminently sane. He was cast for a part in the piece of life from his cradle, and he plays it industriously and thoroughly; but he has never lost the point of view of the plain man. He has much more in common with the President of a free State than with the

<sup>1</sup> A. G. Gardiner: *Prophets, Priests, and Kings*. By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

King by Divine right. He is simply the chief citizen, *primus inter pares*, and the fact that he is chief by heredity and not by election does not qualify his views of the reality of the position. Unlike his nephew, he never associates the Almighty with his right to rule, though he associates Him with his rule. His common sense and his gift of humor save him from these exalted and antiquated assumptions. Nothing is more characteristic of this sensible attitude than his love for the French people and French institutions. No King by "Divine right" could be on speaking terms with a country which has swept the whole institution of Kingship on to the dust-heap.

And his saving grace of humor enables him to enjoy and poke fun at the folly of the tuft-hunter and the collector of Royal cherry stones. He laughingly inverts the folly. "You see that chair," he said in tones of awe to a guest entering his smoking room at Windsor. "That is the chair John Burns sat in." His Majesty has a genuine liking for "J. B." who, I have no doubt, delivered from that chair a copious digest of his Raper lecture, coupled with illuminating statistics on infantile mortality, some approving comments on the member for Battersea, and a little wholesome advice on the duties of a King. This liking for Mr. Burns is as characteristic of the King as his liking for France. He prefers plain, breezy men who admit him to the common humanities rather than those who remind him of his splendid isolation. He would have had no emotion of pride when Scott, who, with all his great qualities, was a deplorable tuft-hunter, solemnly put the wine glass that had touched the Royal lips into the tail pocket of his coat, but he would have immensely enjoyed the moment when he inadvertently sat on it.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Hardy lives in the deepening shadow of the mystery of this unintelligible world. The journey that began with the bucolic joy of *Under the Greenwood Tree* has reached its close in the unmitigated misery of *Jude the Obscure*, accompanied by the mocking voices of those aerial spirits who pass their comments upon the futile struggle of the "Dynasts," as they march their armies to and fro across the mountains and rivers of that globe which the eye of the imagination sees whirling like a midge in space. Napoleon and the Powers! What are they but puppets in the hand of some passionless fate, loveless and hateless, whose purposes are beyond all human vision?

O Immanence, That reasonest not  
In putting forth all things begot,  
Thou buildest Thy house in space — for what?

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. Gardiner: *Prophets, Priests, and Kings.* By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

O Loveless, Hateless! — past the sense  
Of kindly-eyed benevolence,  
To what tune dancest this Immense?

And for answer comes the mocking voice of the Spirit Ironic —

For one I cannot answer. But I know  
‘T is handsome of our Pities so to sing  
The praises of the dreaming, dark, dumb Thing  
That turns the handle of this idle Show.

Night has come down upon the outlook of the writer as it came down over the somber waste of Egdon Heath. There is not a cheerful feature left, not one glint of sunshine in the sad landscape of broken ambitions and squalor and hopeless strivings and triumphant misery. Labor and sorrow, a little laughter, disillusion and suffering — and after that, the dark. Not the dark that flees before the cheerful dawn, but the dark whose greatest benediction is eternal nothingness. Other men of genius, most men of genius, have had their periods of deep dejection in which only the mocking voice of the Spirit Ironic answered their passionate questionings. Shakespeare himself may be assumed to have passed through the valley of gloom in that tremendous period when he produced the great tragedies; but he came out of the shadow, and *The Winter's Tale* has the serenity and peace of a cloudless sunset. But the pilgrimage of Thomas Hardy has led us ever into the deeper shadow. The shades of the prison-house have closed around us and there is no return to the cheerful day. The journey we began with those jolly carol-singers under the greenwood tree has ended in the hopeless misery of Jude.<sup>1</sup>

- XI.** On what basis is the following analysis of the farmer's life made? Do you discover any overlapping of parts? Is the analysis so incomplete as to be of slight value? At what point can you draw the line between analysis and mere "remarks" about a subject?

Over and above the hardness which the farm engenders, and of a far higher quality, is the moral courage it calls into play. Courage is the elemental virtue, for life has been and will forever be a fight. A farmer's life is one incessant fight. Think what he dares! He dares to try to control the face of this planet. In order to raise his crops he pits himself against the weather and the seasons; he forces the soil to his wishes; he wars against the plant world, the bacterial world. Is not that a fight, looked at philosophically, to make one stand aghast? After I had been on the farm seven years, the tremendousness of the fight that my fellow farmers were waging disclosed itself to me with a force no figure

<sup>1</sup> A. G. Gardiner: *Prophets, Priests, and Kings*. By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

of speech can convey. Until one can be brought to some realization of this aspect of the farmer's life, he has no adequate grounds for comprehending the discipline and development which is the very nature of the case that life must receive. I often contrast the life of the clerk at his books, or the mechanic at his bench, or the professional man at his desk, with the lot of the farmer. The dangers and uncertainties they confront seem to me extraordinarily mild compared with the risk the farmer runs. That the former will be paid for their work is almost certain; it is extremely uncertain whether the farmer will be paid for his. He must dare to lose at every turn; scarcely a week passes in which he does not lose, sometimes heavily, sometimes considerably. Those moments in a battle when it seems as if every plan had gone to smash, which so test the fortitude of a general, are moments which a farmer experiences more frequently and more strenuously than men in most occupations. If he sticks to his task successfully his capacity for courage must grow to meet the demands; if he will not stick, he is sifted out by force of circumstance, leaving the stronger type of man to hold the farm.<sup>1</sup>

Analyze the life of the iron-worker, the country doctor, the head-nurse of a city hospital, the college professor, the private detective.

**XII. Would you classify the following selection as formal or informal classification or partition?**

Write a similar treatment of fuel power, moral power, physical strength, intellectual power.

Wherever rain falls streams will form, the water of which represents the concentrated drainage of all the land sloping toward that particular valley at the bottom of which the stream flows. This stream flow consists of the rainfall over the whole watershed less the amount absorbed by the earth or evaporated from the surface, and every such stream is a potential source of power. The possible water-power of a country or district is, therefore, primarily dependent on rainfall, but also, of course, on absorption and surface evaporation. In places where the land is approximately flat, the tendency to concentrate rainfall into streams would be small, as the water would tend to lie rather in swampy low pools, or form innumerable tiny, slowly moving brooks. On the contrary, if the country were of a rolling or mountainous character, there would be two important differences introduced. First, water would concentrate in a few larger and faster-moving streams, the water of which would represent the collection from perhaps thousands of square miles; and secondly, it would be constantly falling from higher to lower levels on its way to the sea. While, therefore, all

<sup>1</sup> Arthur M. Judy: *From the Study to the Farm*. By courtesy of The Atlantic Monthly Company.

streams are potential or possible sources of power, and water-power might seem to be available all over the earth, yet, as a matter of fact, only those streams that are large enough or in which the fall of level is great enough, are really worth while to develop; and only in these districts where the rainfall is great enough and the earth not too flat or too absorbent, or the air too dry, may any streams of useful character at all be expected. The power represented by all the water of a stream, and its entire fall from the source to the sea, is likewise only partly available. No one would think of trying to carry water in pipes from the source of a stream a thousand miles to its mouth for the sake of running some water-wheels.<sup>1</sup>

**XIII.** For what kind of reader do you judge that the following partition of the orchestra was written? Is the partition complete? What is the basis on which it is made? How does it differ from an appreciative criticism of the orchestra as a musical instrument? (See chapter on *Criticism*.)

Make a similar partition of the brass band, the feudal system, the United States Government, the United States Army, the Hague Conference, the pipe organ, the printing press, a canal lock, a Greek drama, a large modern circus, mathematics, etc.

The modern orchestra is the result of a long development, which it would not be profitable to trace in this book. It is a body of instruments, selected with a view to their ability to perform the most complex music. It will be readily understood that such an instrumental body must possess a wide range of timbres, a great compass, extensive gradations of force, the greatest flexibility, and a solid sonority which can be maintained from the finest pianissimo to the heaviest forte. Of course the preservation of some of these qualities, such as flexibility and solidity, depend largely upon the skill of the composer, but they are all inherent in the orchestra. They are gained by the use of three classes of instruments, grouped under the general heads of wood, brass, and strings, which have special tone-colors and individuality when heard in their distinct groups, but which combine admirably in the ensemble.

It is the custom to name the three groups in the order given because, for the sake of convenience, composers place the flute parts at the top of the page of the score where the wide margin gives room for their high notes. The other wood-wind instruments follow the flutes, so as to keep the wood-choir together. The brass is placed under the wood because its members are so often com-

<sup>1</sup> Charles E. Lucke: *Power*. By courtesy of the publishers, the Columbia University Press.

bined with some of the wood instruments in sounding chords. This brings the strings to the bottom of the page, the instruments of percussion (drums, cymbals, etc.) being inserted between them and the brass.

The instruments of the conventional symphonic orchestra of the classic period, then, are flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons in the wood department, horns, trumpets, and trombones in the brass, and violins, violas, violoncellos, and double-basses for strings. Modern composers have added for special reasons the English horn, which is the alto of the oboe, the bass-clarinet, the contrabassoon (which sounds an octave lower than the ordinary bassoon), the bass-tuba, a powerful double-bass brass instrument, and the harp. The piccolo, a small, shrill flute sounding an octave higher than the ordinary flute, was introduced into the symphony orchestra by Beethoven, though it had frequently been used before in opera scores.<sup>1</sup>

- XIV.** Criticize the following analysis of the indispensability of Law. Write an analysis of the necessity for conformity to current style in dress, the necessity for theaters, of the reason why ultimate democracy is inevitable for the whole world; of the inevitability of conflict between advancing thought and established religion; of the unavoidability of struggle between capital and labor.

The truth is, laws, religions, creeds, and systems of ethics, instead of making society better than its best unit, make it worse than its average unit, because they are never up to date. You will ask me: "Why have them at all?" I will tell you. They are made necessary, though we all secretly detest them, by the fact that the number of people who can think out a line of conduct for themselves even on one point is very small, and the number who can afford the time for it is still smaller. Nobody can afford the time to do it on all points. The professional thinker may on occasion make his own morality and philosophy as the cobbler may make his own boots; but the ordinary man of business must buy at the shop, so to speak, and put up with what he finds on sale there, whether it exactly suits him or not, because he can neither make a morality for himself nor do without one. This typewriter with which I am writing is the best I can get; but it is by no means a perfect instrument; and I have not the smallest doubt that in fifty years' time authors will wonder how men could have put up with so clumsy a contrivance. When a better one is invented I shall buy it: until then, not being myself an inventor, I must make the best of it, just as my Protestant and Roman

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Henderson: *What is Good Music?* By courtesy of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City. Copyright, 1898.

Catholic and Agnostic friends make the best of their imperfect creeds and systems. Oh, Father Tucker, worshiper of Liberty, where shall we find a land where the thinking and moralizing can be done without division of labor?

Besides, what have deep thinking and moralizing to do with the most necessary and least questionable side of law? Just consider how much we need law in matters which have absolutely no moral bearing at all. Is there anything more aggravating than to be told, when you are socially promoted, and are not quite sure how to behave yourself in the circles you enter for the first time, that good manners are merely a matter of good sense, and that rank is but the guinea's stamp: the man's the gowd for a' that? Imagine taking the field with an army which knew nothing except that the soldier's duty is to defend his country bravely, and think, not of his own safety, nor of home and beauty, but of England! Or of leaving the traffic of Piccadilly or Broadway to proceed on the understanding that every driver should keep to that side of the road which seemed to him to promote the greatest happiness to the greatest number! Or of stage managing Hamlet by assuring the Ghost that whether he entered from the right or the left could make no difference to the greatness of Shakespeare's play, and that all he need concern himself about was holding the mirror up to nature! Law is never so necessary as when it has no ethical significance whatever, and is pure law for the sake of law. The law that compels me to keep to the left when driving along Oxford Street is ethically senseless, as is shown by the fact that keeping to the right serves equally well in Paris; and it certainly destroys my freedom to choose my side; but by enabling me to count on every one else keeping to the left also, thus making traffic possible and safe, it enlarges my life and sets my mind free for nobler issues. Most laws, in short, are not the expression of the ethical verdicts of the community, but pure etiquette and nothing else. What they do express is the fact that over most of the field of social life there are wide limits within which it does not matter what people do, though it matters enormously under given circumstances whether you can depend on their all doing the same thing. The wasp, who can be depended on absolutely to sting if you squeeze him, is less of a nuisance than the man who tries to do business with you not according to the custom of business, but according to the Sermon on the Mount, or than the lady who dines with you and refuses, on republican and dietetic principles, to allow precedence to a duchess or to partake of food which contains uric acid. The ordinary man cannot get through the world without being told what to do at every turn, and basing such calculations as he is capable of on the assumption that every one else will calculate on the same assumptions. Even your man of genius accepts a hundred rules for every

one he challenges; and you may lodge in the same house with an Anarchist for ten years without noticing anything exceptional about him. Martin Luther, the priest, horrified the greater half of Christendom by marrying a nun, yet was a submissive conformist in countless ways, living orderly as a husband and father, wearing what his bootmaker and tailor made for him, and dwelling in what the builder built for him, although he would have died rather than take his Church from the Pope. And when he got a Church made by himself to his liking, generations of men calling themselves Lutherans took that Church from him just as unquestioningly as he took the fashion of his clothes from the tailor. As the race evolves, many a convention which recommends itself by its obvious utility to every one passes into an automatic habit like breathing. Doubtless also an improvement in our nerves and judgment may enlarge the list of emergencies which individuals may be entrusted to deal with on the spur of the moment without reference to regulations; but a ready-made code of conduct for general use will always be needed as a matter of overwhelming convenience by all members of communities.

The continual danger to liberty created by law arises, not from the encroachments of Governments, which are always regarded with suspicion, but from the immense utility and consequent popularity of law, and the terrifying danger and obvious inconvenience of anarchy; so that even pirates appoint and obey a captain. Law soon acquires such a good character that people will believe no evil of it; and at this point it becomes possible for priests and rulers to commit the most pernicious crimes in the name of law and order. Creeds and laws come to be regarded as applications to human conduct of eternal and immutable principles of good and evil; and breakers of the law are abhorred as sacrilegious scoundrels to whom nothing is sacred. Now this, I need not tell you, is a very serious error. No law is so independent of circumstances that the time never comes for breaking it, changing it, scrapping it as obsolete, and even making its observance a crime. In a developing civilization nothing can make laws tolerable unless their changes and modifications are kept as closely as possible on the heels of the changes and modifications in social conditions which development involves. Also there is a bad side to the very convenience of law. It deadens the conscience of individuals by relieving them of the ethical responsibility of their own actions. When this relief is made as complete as possible, it reduces a man to a condition in which his very virtues are contemptible. Military discipline, for example, aims at destroying the individuality and initiative of the soldier whilst increasing his mechanical efficiency, until he is simply a weapon with the power of hearing and obeying orders. In him you have legality, duty, obedience,

self-denial, submission to external authority, carried as far as it can be carried; and the result is that in England, where military service is voluntary, the common soldier is less respected than any other serviceable worker in the community. The police constable, who is a civilian and has to use his own judgment and act on his own responsibility in innumerable petty emergencies, is by comparison a popular and esteemed citizen. The Roman Catholic peasant who consults his parish priest instead of his conscience, and submits wholly to the authority of his Church, is mastered and governed either by statesmen and cardinals who despise his superstition, or by Protestants who are at least allowed to persuade themselves that they have arrived at their religious opinions through the exercise of their private judgment. The moral evolution of the social individual is from submission and obedience as economizers of effort and responsibility, and safeguards against panic and incontinence, to willfulness and self-assertion made safe by reason and self-control, just as plainly as his physical growth leads him from the perambulator and the nurse's apron strings to the power of walking alone, and from the tutelage of the boy to the responsibility of the man. But it is useless for impatient spirits (like you and I, for instance) to call on people to walk before they can stand. Without high gifts of reason and self-control: that is, without strong common-sense, no man yet dares trust himself out of the school of authority. What he does is to claim gradual relaxations of the discipline, so as to have as much liberty as he thinks is good for him, and as much government as he thinks he needs to keep him straight. If he goes too fast he soon finds himself asking helplessly, "What ought I to do?" and so, after running to the doctor, the lawyer, the expert, the old friend, and all the other quacks for advice, he runs back to the law again to save him from all these and from himself. The law may be wrong; but anyhow it spares him the responsibility of choosing, and will either punish those who make him look ridiculous by exposing its folly, or, when the constitution is too democratic for this, at least guarantee that the majority is on his side.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Bernard Shaw: *The Sanity of Art*. By courtesy of the publishers, Boni & Liveright.

## CHAPTER V

### MECHANISMS, PROCESSES, AND ORGANIZATIONS

THE problem of giving directions for making or doing something, or of explaining the working of an organization, is not always easy to solve. Most difficulties, however, occur through lack of considering just what the problem involves, and through lack of sufficiently simplifying the material. Thus, when you ask an old man in a strange city where the post-office is, he is likely to reply somewhat as follows: "You keep on just as you are going for a little ways, and then turn down a narrow street on the right and go along for four blocks, and then turn to your left and go until you come to a square, and then go across it and down a side street and through an office building, and then it's the stone building on the corner of the second street to your right." You stroke your chin, meditate a bit, and, if you are polite, thank your informant for his kind intentions. Then you ask the next person whom you meet to tell you where the post-office is. The old man meant well, of course, but he failed to simplify. So did the author of the little book that Johnny received for Christmas mean well when he explained how to make a beautiful chemical effect. But Johnny, who was a fairly impetuous youth, did not stop to read the foot-note at the end which warned against working near a fire. When he was seraphically pouring his chemicals together near the old oil lamp in the "shop" there came a flash, a deafening roar — and little Johnny had no time either to examine footnotes or, after the smoke had cleared, for *post-mortem* complaints. The trouble lay in the fact that the author did not give Johnny the necessary information at the essential time.

It seems that neither piety nor wit will suffice to locate post-offices or direct experiments or explain machines. Better than either of these is the ability to make the mechanism, the process, the organization transparently clear, with each bit of information given at exactly the proper moment. For, since the object of such explanation as attempts to make clear is primarily information, the main quality of the writing should be clearness. Everything that stands in the way of this quality should be made to surrender to explanation. If the subject is itself interesting or remarkable, the facts may speak for themselves, as in an account of the nebular hypothesis; if the subject is merely common, as for example the force pump, the primary aim should be clearness. Pleasing presentation, however desirable, is secondary. No amount of pleasant reading on the subject of making photographs, the working of periscopes, the organization of literary societies will be of value if at the end the reader has not a well-ordered idea of how to go to work or of how the thing of which you treat is operated.

### General Cautions

For these reasons certain principles of caution can be laid down. The first caution is, do not take too much for granted on the reader's part. First of all take stock of your reader and his knowledge of the subject and then write in accordance with your discoveries. If, in explaining the bicycle to a Fiji Islander, you fail to note that the two wheels are placed tandem rather than parallel, he may form a thoroughly queer notion of the machine. And your protest, "Why, I supposed he would *know that!*" is in vain. This caution does not mean that you must adopt a tone of condescension, must say, "Now children," and patter on, but that you will not omit any important part of the explanation unless you are sure that your reader is acquainted with it. The second caution, which is corollary with the first, is

that you do not substitute for the gaps in the written information the silent knowledge that is in your own mind. The danger here lies in the fact that, knowing your subject well, you will write part of it and think the rest. Having for a long time practiced the high hurdles, for example, when you come to explain them you will run the paradoxical risk of being so thoroughly acquainted with the subject that you will actually omit much vital information and thus make your treatment thin. And the third caution is, avoid being over technical. An expert can always understand plain English; a layman, on the other hand, can soon become hopelessly bewildered in a sea of technicalities. Treatment of technicalities demands sense, therefore; when a term is reasonably common its presence can do no harm, but when a term is known only to the few, substitute for it, when writing for the many, plain English, or define your terms.

### Centralization

Perhaps the greatest lack in expositions of this type is centralization. A reader rises from the account of a cream separator or a suspension bridge or the feudal system with the feeling that many cogs and wires and wheels and spouts and lords and vassals are involved, but without a clear correlation of all these elements into a clear and simple whole. Now a suspension bridge is much more organic than a scrap heap, and the feudal system than a city directory. It is for you as the writer to make this clear, to show that all the things are related, that they affect each other and interact. For this purpose you will find the greatest help in the device of ascertaining what the root principle is, the fundamental notion or purpose of the subject that you are explaining. For example, to make your reader see the relation of the various parts of the tachometer you should discover and present the fact that the machine relies primarily on the principle of centrifugal force as affecting the mercury that

whirls as the automobile moves. Once this principle is grasped by the reader, the various parts of the mechanism assume their proper places and relations and become clear. Now obviously this root principle is to be sought *in the subject itself*; here is no place for an author to let his fancy roam where it will without keeping an eye steadily upon the machine or process. You are trying to explain the machine, not some vague or fanciful idea of what the machine might be if it were like what your fancy says; therefore, in the words of the good old advice, which comes handy in most writing, "keep your eye on the object," which in this case will be the machine or the process or the organization. And the more complicated the mechanism or process, the more necessary will be the discovery of the root principle — a printing machine, for instance, with its amazing complexity, will be helped wonderfully by such a device, and the reader will welcome the device even more than he would in an explanation of how, for example, a fountain pen works — though he will be glad for it in any case.

This root principle, nucleus, core, kernel can often be stated in one sentence. You can say, for instance, in speaking of bridges like those across the East River, "A suspension bridge consists of a roadway hung by wires from huge cables which are anchored at the ends and are looped up over one or more high supports in the stream." This sentence may not be immediately and entirely clear, but it serves to show quickly what relations parts have to each other, and to it the reader may refer in his mind when detailed treatment of the maze of wires and bolts becomes bewildering. Often this sentence need not be expressed alone; it should always be thought out in the writer's mind.

If it is expressed, such a sentence may stand at the beginning as a sort of quick picture, or it may come at the end as a collecting statement of what has preceded, or at any point where it seems to be of the most value to the reader. It may

take various forms as, for example, it may state in essence how the machine or process works, is operated, or what it is for, or of what it consists. If it occurs at the end as a summary, it may be a summary of *facts* in which the points made or the parts described are enumerated, or it may be a summary of *essence*, in which the significance or the principle of the thing is stated. In the following examples the sentence will be found near the beginning in both cases, and in the nature of a statement of the principle of operation.

Of tools used for cutting, perhaps the most remarkable of all is the oxygen blow-pipe. This is a little tool something the shape of a pistol — which a workman can easily hold in one hand. It is connected by a flexible tube to a cylinder of compressed oxygen, and by another tube to a supply of coal-gas. Thus a jet of oxygen and a jet of coal-gas issue from the nozzle at the end of the blow-pipe, and, mingling there, produce a fine point of flame burning with intense heat. If this be directed upon the edge of a thick bar or plate of steel it will in a few seconds melt a tiny groove in it, and, if the pipe be moved along, that groove can be developed into a cut and in that way very thick pieces of steel can be severed quite easily. The harder the steel, too, the more easily it is cut, for hard steel contains more carbon than soft, and that has a tendency to burn with oxygen, actually increasing the heat of the flame. A bar of iron a foot long can be cut right down the center in fifty seconds. It is said that scientific burglars have been known to use blow-pipes to open safes with; but a very strange thing about them is that, while they will cut hard steel of almost any thickness almost like butter, they are completely baffled by a thin sheet of copper. The reason of this is that copper is such a good conductor of heat that the heat of the flame is conducted quickly away, and so the part in contact with the flame never becomes hot enough to melt.<sup>1</sup>

There is another very efficient substitute for the dynamite cartridge, which may abolish blasting even in hard-rock mines. It is a hydraulic cartridge, or an apparatus that works on the principle of the hydraulic jack. Unlike dynamite, which consists of a lot of

<sup>1</sup> Thomas W. Corbin: *Engineering of To-day*. By courtesy of the publishers, Seeley, Service & Co., London.

stored and highly concentrated energy that is let fly to do what destruction it may, the hydraulic cartridge is absolutely inert and devoid of potential energy when placed in the blast-hole. Only after it is in place is the energy applied to it. This it gradually accumulates until it acquires enough to burst open the rock without wasting a lot of energy in pulverizing it. The apparatus is under the direct control of the miner all the time. There is nothing haphazard about its operation.

The cartridge consists of a strong steel cylinder, made in various sizes. Disposed at right angles to the length of the cylinder are a number of pistons, or rams, that may be forced out laterally by pumping water into the cylinder. The cartridge is introduced into the blast-hole with the rams retracted. Then a quick-action pump is operated to move the rams out so that they come in contact with the rock. After this, by means of a screw-lever a powerful pressure is exerted upon the water, which forces out the rams until the rock gives way under the strain.<sup>1</sup>

### Processes

The development of this kind of exposition will vary somewhat according to the nature of the subject. If you are explaining a process — how to make a campfire, or how to find the width of an unbridged river, or how to make bread — you will naturally follow the chronological order and tell what to do first, what second, and so on. If several materials are to be used in the process, you may enumerate them all at the beginning, for collection, or state them piece by piece as they are needed. For example, you may say, "In making a kite you will need so many pieces of such wood of such and such sizes, with paper or cloth, strong twine, glue, nails, etc." You may cast the whole process into a personal mood by telling how some one, perhaps yourself, did it on a previous occasion. This method, if it is judiciously used, adds interest. You must take care not to seem to encumber

<sup>1</sup> Taken from *The Century Magazine* by permission of the publishers, The Century Co.

obviously simple directions, however, with the machinery of personal narrative so that the whole account is longer than it should be. In case you are treating some process in which mistakes are easily made, you can often help the reader by showing how some one — preferably yourself — did it wrongly and thereby came to grief. Or you can state concisely what not to do if there is chance for mistake. In developing films, for example, you may warn the reader not to mix any of the Hypo with the Fixing Bath; in picking his apples not to break the twigs of the tree; in paddling a canoe through rapids not to become excited. Note how, in the account which follows of how to handle a punt, the author makes the material quite human and personal — to the reader's pleasure.

You may get yourself a tub or a working-boat or a wherry, a robroy or a dinghy, for every craft that floats is known on the Thames; but the favorite craft are the Canadian canoe and the punt. The canoe you will be familiar with, but your ideas of a punt are probably derived from a farm-built craft you have poled about American duck-marshes — which bears about the same relationship to this slender, half-decked cedar beauty that a canal-boat bears to a racing-shell.

During your first perilous lessons in punting, you will probably be in apprehension of ducking your mentor, who is lounging among the cushions in the bow. But you cannot upset the punt any more than you can discompose the Englishman; the punt simply upsets you without seeming to be aware of it. And when you crawl dripping up the bank, consoled only by the fact that the Humane Society man was not on hand with his boat-hook to pull you out by the seat of the trousers, your mentor will gravely explain how you made your mistake. Instead of bracing your feet firmly on the bottom and pushing with the pole, you were leaning on the pole and pushing with your feet. When the pole stuck in the clay bottom, of course it pulled you out of the boat.

Steering is a matter of long practice. When you want to throw the bow to the left, you have only to pry the stern over to the right

as you are pulling the pole out of the water. To throw the bow to the right, ground the pole a foot or so wide of the boat, and then lean over and pull the boat up to it. That is not so easy, but you will learn the wrist motion in time. When all this comes like second nature, you will feel that you have become a part of the punt, or rather that the punt has taken life and become a part of you.

A particular beauty of punting is that, more than any other sport, it brings you into personal contact, so to speak, with the landscape. In a few days you will know every inch of the bottom of the Char, some of it perhaps by more intimate experience than you desire. Over there, on the other curve of the bend, the longest pole will not touch bottom. Fight shy of that place. Just beyond here, in the narrows, the water is so shallow that you can get the whole length of your body into every sweep. As for the shrubbery on the bank, you will soon learn these hawthorns, if only to avoid barging into them. And the Magdalen chestnut, which spreads its shade so beautifully above the water just beyond, becomes quite familiar when its low-reaching branches have once caught the top of your pole and torn it from your hands.<sup>1</sup>

### Mechanisms

If you are explaining a mechanism, you may follow different orders. You may explain chronologically, showing what happens first, what next, and so on, as in the printing press you would show what happens first to the paper, and then what processes follow. Here you must be careful not to give a long list at the beginning of all the different parts of the machine. Such a list bewilders and is rarely of any real value. Instead of saying, for example, that a reaper and binder consists of a reel, a knife, a canvas platform and belt, etc., you will do well to simplify at the beginning, and say, perhaps, that from the front the machine looks like a dash with an inverted V at one end: thus: —^ and then go on to relate the various parts to this simple scheme. The

<sup>1</sup> John Corbin: *An American at Oxford*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

brief paragraph which follows illustrates the principle in a slight space.

The stone-boat is a peculiar vehicle incidental to America, and has nothing whatsoever to do with the water. It resembles a huge metal tray or shovel hauled by a team of horses. And its special path is as novel as the boat itself. It is only two wooden lines fashioned from tree-logs adzed roughly flat on the upper side, well greased, and laid promiscuously and roughly parallel on the ground. The stone is prized and levered on to the tray, and hauled with a speed, which, bearing in mind the primitive road, is astonishing, to the dump, where a sharp swing round on the part of the horses pitches the mass down the bank.<sup>1</sup>

If you prefer, you can use, instead of the chronological order, the device of showing what the need was for the machine and how it fills the need, or what the object of the machine is and how it accomplishes that object. An explanation of the cotton gin might present the woeful waste of time before the gin was invented and then show how the invention annuls that waste. One of the periscope might state the object of invisible observation and then show how, by tubes and mirrors, this object is accomplished. Or finally, as a third general method, you may state the root principle and then expand in detail. With this scheme you might state that the piano is an instrument in which felt hammers strike metal strings that are stretched across a sounding board, and then go on to show the significance, as related to this notion, of keys, pedals, music rest, and other details. Often this method is the most helpful for a reader, since it gives him at once a nucleus of theory round which he can group the details with immediate or rapid understanding of their relations and significance. In so simple a machine as the ice cream freezer to introduce names like "dasher" without previous warning may result in momentary confusion,

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Talbot: *The Making of a Great Canadian Railway*. By courtesy of the publishers' Seeley, Service & Co., London.

whereas if the principle is stated at the beginning, and the reader knows that the object is to bring the cream into contact with the coldest possible *surface* so as to produce speed in freezing, the "dasher," when mentioned, is at once significant. The description and explanation of a track-layer, which follows, is so made as to be both clear and interesting.

The track-layer is one of the most interesting tools with which the railway-builder carries out his epoch-making work. It is a cumbersome, ungainly, and fearsome-looking implement, but with a convincing, grim, and business-like appearance. From the front it resembles a gallows, and for this reason has earned the sinister sobriquet of "the gibbet" among certain members of the engineering fraternity. On the front of the truck there is a lofty rectangular scaffolding of rigid construction, strongly based and supported for the hard, heavy work it has to perform. A jib runs forward into the air from the bottom of either leg to meet at the outer extremity and to form a derrick. The car on which the structure is mounted carries a number of small steam-engines, each of which has to perform a particular function, while at the commanding point high up on the rectangular construction is a small bridge, from which the man in control of the machine carries out his various tasks and controls the whole machine. Ropes, hooks, and pulleys are found on every side, and though, from the cursory point of view, it appears an intricate piece of mechanism, yet its operation is absurdly simple.

This machine constitutes the front vehicle of the train, with the bridge facing the grade and the projecting boom overhanging the track. Immediately behind are several trucks piled high with steel rails, fish-plates to secure connection between successive lengths of rails, spikes, and other necessaries. Then comes the locomotive, followed by a long train of trucks laden with sleepers. On the right-hand side of the train, level with the deck of the trucks, extends a continuous trough, with its floor consisting of rollers. It reaches from the rearmost car in the train to 40 or 50 feet in advance of the track-layer, the overhanging section being supported by ropes and tackle controlled from the track-layer truck whereby the trough can be raised and lowered as desired.

The appliance is operated as follows. The engine pushes the fore-part of the train slowly forward until the end of the last rail laid is approached. The rollers in the trough, which is in reality a mechanical conveyor, are set in motion. Then the gangs of men stationed on the rear trucks with might and main pitch the bulky sleepers into the trough. Caught up by the rollers, the ties are whirled along to the front of the train, and tumble to the ground in a steady, continuous stream. As they emerge, they are picked up by another gang of men who roughly throw them into position on to the grade. Other members of the gang, equipped with axes and crowbars, push, pull, haul, and prize the ties into their relative positions and at equal distances apart.

When thirty or forty sleepers have been deposited in this manner, a pair of steel rails are picked up by the booms from the trucks behind the track-layer, are swung through the air, and lowered. As they near the ground ready hands grasp the bar of steel, steady it in its descent, and guide it into its correct position. The gauge is brought into play dexterously, and before one can realize what has happened the men are spiking the pair of rails to the sleepers, have slipped the bolts into the fish-plates connecting the new rail with its fellow already in position, and the track-layer has moved slowly forward some 13 or 16 feet over a new unit of track, meanwhile disgorging further sleepers from the mouth of the trough.

The noise is deafening, owing to the clattering of the weighty baulks of timber racing over the noisy rollers in the conveyor, the rattle of metal, and the clang-clang of the hammers as the men with powerful strokes drive home the spikes fastening the rail to its wooden bed, and the hissing and screeching of steam. Amid the silence of the wilderness the din created by the track-layer at work is heard for some time before you can gain a glimpse of the machine train. The men speak but little, for the simple reason that they could scarcely make themselves heard if they attempted conversation. Each moves with wonderful precision, like a part of an intricate machine.

In this way the rail creeps forward relentlessly at a steady, monotonous pace. The lines of sleepers and rails on the track disappear with amazing rapidity, and the men engaged in the task of charging the conveyor-trough and swinging the rails forward, appear to

be in a mad race with steam-driven machinery. The perspiration rolls off their faces in great beads, and they breathe heavily as they grasp and toss the weighty strips of timber about as if they were straws. There is no pause or diminution in their speed. If they ease up at all the fact becomes evident at the front in the course of a few seconds in a unanimous outcry from the gangs on the grade for more material, which spurs the lagging men on the trucks behind to greater effort. The only respite from the exhausting labor is when the trucks have been emptied of all rails or sleepers and the engine has to run back for a further supply, or when the hooter rings out the time for meals or the cessation of labor.

The track-layer at work is the most fascinating piece of machinery in the building of a large railway. The steam-shovel may be alluring, and the sight of a large hill of rock being blown sky-high may compel attention, but it is the mechanical means which have been evolved to carry out the last phase — the laying of the metals — that is the most bewitching. One can see the railway growing in the fullest sense of the word — can see the thin, sinuous ribbon of steel crawling over the flat prairie, across spidery bridges, through ravine-like rock-cuts, gloomy tunnels, and along lofty embankments. Now and again, when the apparatus has secured a full complement of hands, and every other factor is conducive, the men will set to work in more deadly earnest than usual, bent on setting up a record. Races against time have become quite a craze among the crews operating the track-layer on the various railways throughout America, and consequently the men allow no opportunity to set up a new record, when all conditions are favorable, to slip by.<sup>1</sup>

### Organizations

If you are explaining an organization you may again use the chronological order and show how the organization came about as it is, how for example the Federal Reserve Board was appointed for certain reasons each of which has its correspondent in the constitution of the board. Such a method is useful in explaining the feudal system, the college fra-

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Talbot: *The Making of a Great Canadian Railway*. By courtesy of the publishers, Seeley, Service & Co., London.

ternity, the national convention of a political party. Or, finally, you can state the root idea, sometimes appearing as purpose or significance, and then expand it. A labor union, thus treated, is a body of men who individually have slight power of resisting organized capital, but can collectively obtain their rights and demands.

### Aids in Gaining Clearness

Clearness then, through centralization, is the all-important necessity of expositions of this type. To aid in gaining this quality you will do well to avoid technical terms, as has already been mentioned. You can make use of graphic charts when they will be useful, so long as they are not merely a lazy device for escaping the task of writing clearly. Some machines, such as the printing press or the rock drill, defy explanation without charts and plates. Textbooks often wisely make use of this device. You can also use familiar illustrations, as the one here used of the reaper and binder or the one likening Brooklyn Bridge to a letter H with the sides far apart, the cross piece extended beyond the sides, and a cable looped over the tops of the sides. Such illustrations at the beginning of the whole or sections are useful in helping the reader to visualize. Another important aid to clearness is to take care that nothing is mentioned for which the way has not been prepared. Just as in a play we insist that the action of a character be consistent, that a good man do not suddenly commit wanton murder, and that the villain do not suddenly appear saintly, so we rightly demand that we be not suddenly confronted with a crank, wheel, office, or step in a process which bewilders us. You ought to write so that your reader will never pucker his brow and say, "What is this?" And when a detail has some special bearing, introduce it at the significant point. To have told little Johnny in the beginning that he must keep his chemicals away from flame would have avoided explosion

and death; to declaim loudly after the explosion is of no value. And finally, from a purely rhetorical standpoint, make careful transition from section to section so that the reader will know exactly where divisions occur, and make liberal use of summaries whenever they may be useful without being too cumbersome.

Notice how, in the following paragraph, the writer has given the gist of the machines so that, if he wishes to expand and make a full treatment, he will still have a nucleus which will considerably facilitate the reader's understanding.

Continuous dredges are of four types — the ladder, the hydraulic, the stirring, and the pneumatic dredges. The ladder dredge excavates the bottom by means of a series of buckets running with great velocity along a ladder. The buckets scrape the soil at the bottom, raise the débris to the surface and discharge it into barges or conveyors so as to send it to its final destination. The hydraulic dredge removes the material from the bottom by means of a large centrifugal pump which draws the materials, mixed with water, into a suction tube and forces them to distant points by means of a long line of pipes. The stirring dredges are those employed in the excavation of soils composed of very finely divided particles; they agitate the soils and the material thus brought into suspension is carried away by the action or current of water. The pneumatic dredges are those in which the material from the bottom is forced into the suction tube and thence into the discharging pipe, by the action of continuous jets of compressed air turned upward into the tube.<sup>1</sup>

Notice also the care with which the author of the paragraph which follows and explains the phonopticon states early in his treatment the scientific basis for the operation of the machine, without knowing which a reader would be hopelessly confused to understand how the machine could possibly do what the author says it does.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Prelini: *Dredges and Dredging*. By courtesy of the publishers, D. Van Nostrand Company, New York City.

The element selenium, when in crystalline form, possesses the peculiar property of being electro-sensitive to light. It is a good or bad conductor of electricity according to the intensity of the light that falls upon it, and its response to variations of illumination is virtually instantaneous.

This interesting property has been utilized in a wide variety of applications, ranging from the transmission of a picture over a telegraph line to the automatic detection of comets; but by far the most marvelous application is that of the phonopticon. . . . It is an apparatus that will actually read a book or a newspaper, uttering a characteristic combination of musical sounds for every letter it scans.

The principle of operation is not difficult to understand. A row of, say, three tiny selenium crystals is employed, each crystal forming part of a telephone circuit leading to a triple telephone-receiver. In each circuit there is an interrupter that breaks up the current into pulsations, or waves, of sufficient frequency to produce a musical note in the receiver. The frequency differs in the three circuits, so that each produces its characteristic pitch. Although the conductivity of selenium is increased by intensifying its illumination, the electrical connections in this apparatus are so chosen that while the crystals are illuminated no sounds are heard in the telephone, but when the crystals are darkened, there is an instant audible response.

The apparatus is placed upon the printed matter that is to be read, with the row of crystals disposed at right angles to the line of type. The paper directly under the crystals is illuminated by a beam of light. This is reflected from the unprinted part of the paper with sufficient intensity to keep the telephone quiet, but when the crystals are moved over the black printing, the light is diminished, and the crystals lose their conductivity, causing the telephone to respond with a set of sounds which vary with the shape of the letter. Suppose the apparatus was being moved over the letter V, the upper crystal would encounter the letter first, then the middle one would respond, next the lower one would come into action for an instant, followed by a second response of the middle crystal and a final response of the upper crystal. A set of notes would be sounded somewhat after this fashion: *me, re, do, re, mi.*

The sound combination with such letters as S and O is more complicated but it is distinguishable. When we read with the natural eye we do not spell out the words letter by letter, but recognize them by their appearance as a whole. In the same way with the mechanical eye entire words can be recognized after a little practice.

• • • • •  
Of course the phonopticon is yet in the laboratory stages, but it offers every prospect of practical success, and its possibilities are untold. It is quite conceivable that the apparatus may be elaborated to such an extent that a blind man may see (by ear) where he is going. His world may never be bathed in sunshine, but he may learn to admire the beauties of nature as translated from light into music.<sup>1</sup>

### Aids in Gaining Interest

If mere clearness alone were the only quality to strive for, this kind of writing might remain, however useful, eternally dull except to one who is vitally interested in the facts, however they are treated. But for this there is no need; no reason exists why you should not make this kind of writing attractive. For you can, in addition to making a machine clear, endow it with life; in addition to enumerating the steps in a process, make it a fascinating adventure. Suppose that you are explaining how to learn to swim — is not the thought of waving one's arms and legs in dreamy or frantic rhythm as he lies prone across the piano bench humorous? Why, then, exclude the humor? And is not the person who is trying to learn much alive, with the pit of his stomach nervously aware of the hardness of the bench? Why, then, make him a wooden automaton, or worse, a dead agent? So long as you do not obscure the point that the reader should note, all the life, all the humor of which you and the process are capable should be introduced. Just so with a machine. You can explain the engine of an airship so that the reader will

<sup>1</sup> Taken from *The Century Magazine* by permission of the publishers, The Century Co.

exclaim, "I see"; what you ought to do is so to explain the engine that he will say, "I see, and bless you, I'd like to see one go!" You ought to make the beautiful efficiency, the exquisite humming life of the thing, its poise, its athletic trimness so take hold of the reader that his imagination will be fired, his interest thoroughly aroused.

Now this you cannot do by thrusting in extraneous matter to leaven the lump. Webster in the Senate did not introduce vaudeville to enliven his *Reply to Hayne*, but he found in the subject itself the interest. First of all, then, study your machine, your process, your organization, until you see what its quality is, its spirit, until you are yourself aware of its life, and then make this live for your reader. A railroad locomotive should be made thrilling with its pomp and power, a military movement should be made an exquisitely quick piece of living constructive work, a submarine should have all the craft and the romance of a haunting redskin, the roasting of a goose should be made a process to rouse the joys of gluttony forevermore. Now to do this will require exercise of the imagination, and if you find yours weak your first duty is to develop it. If it is strong and active, on the other hand, allow it free play, only watching lest it may obscure the subject — for clearness is always first. There need, however, be no discrepancy between the two qualities. The following extract from an essay by Mr. Dallas Lore Sharp illustrates the possibilities of both interest and truth.

#### ANY CHILD CAN USE IT

#### THE PERFECT AUTOMATIC CARPET-LAYER

No more carpet-laying bills. Do your own laying. No wrinkles. No crowded corners. No sore knees. No pounded fingers. No broken backs. Stand up and lay your carpet with the Perfect Automatic. Easy as sweeping. Smooth as putting paper on the wall. You hold the handle and the Perfect Automatic does the rest. Patent Applied For. Price —

—but it was not the price! It was the tool—a weird hybrid tool, part gun, part rake, part catapult, part curry-comb, fit apparently for almost any purpose, from the business of blunderbuss to the office of an apple-picker. Its handle, which any child could hold, was somewhat shorter and thicker than a hoe-handle, and had a slotted tin barrel on its ventral side along its entire length. Down this barrel, their points sticking through the slot, moved the tacks in single file to a spring-hammer close to the floor. This hammer was operated by a lever or tongue at the head of the handle, the connection between the hammer at the distal end and the lever at the proximal end being effected by means of a steel-wire spinal cord down the dorsal side of the handle. Over the fist of a hammer spread a jaw of sharp teeth to take hold of the carpet. The thing could not talk; but it could do almost anything else, so fearfully and wonderfully was it made.

As for laying carpets with it, any child could do that. But we did n't have any children then, and I had quite outgrown my childhood. I tried to be a boy again just for that night. I grasped the handle of the Perfect Automatic, stretched with our united strength, and pushed down on the lever. The spring-hammer drew back, a little trap at the end of the slotted tin barrel opened for the tack, the tack jumped out, turned over, landed point downward upon the right spot in the carpet, the crouching hammer sprang, and —

And then I lifted up the Perfect Automatic to see if the tack went in, — a simple act that any child could do, but which took automatically and perfectly all the stretch out of the carpet; for the hammer did not hit the tack; the tack really did not get through the trap; the trap did not open the slot; the slot — but no matter. We have no carpets now. The Perfect Automatic stands in the garret with all its original varnish on. At its feet sits a half-used can of "Beesene, the Prince of Floor Pastes."<sup>1</sup>

Besides the devices that have been mentioned you can use that of making the agents in the action definite, real persons,

<sup>1</sup> Dallas Lore Sharp : *The Hills of Hingham*, "The Dustless Duster." Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

and you can make a process seem to be actually going on before the eyes of the reader. You can suffuse the whole theme with a human spirit, for everything has a human significance if only you will find it.

Finally, use tact in approaching your reader. Do not "talk down" to him, and do not over-compliment his intelligence or wheedle him. Rather regard him as a person desirous of knowing, your subject as a thing capable of interest, and yourself as a really enthusiastic devotee. Take this attitude, and as long as you make clear, so long your chances for success will be good.

### EXERCISES

- I. 1. Indicate other practical root principles beside the one mentioned which a theme on any of the following subjects might well try to express.
  1. How to teach a dog tricks — the patience required.
  2. How to learn to swim — the humor, or the grim determination.
  3. How to manage an automobile — the cool-headedness required.
  4. How to find the trouble with a balky engine — the careful, patient, unangered searching.
  5. How to make an exquisite angel cake — the delicacy necessary.
  6. A steel mill — the power displayed.
  7. The aeroplane motor — its concentrated energy.
  8. The reaper and binder — the cooperation of parts.
  9. The camera — its sensitiveness.
  10. The adding machine — the uncanny sureness of it.
  11. The United States Supreme Court — its deliberateness.
  12. The feudal system — its picturesque injustice.
  13. The college literary society — its opportunities.
  14. The Grange — its sensible usefulness.
  15. The Federal Reserve Board — its safety.
2. Make two or more outlines for each subject, choosing your material to indicate different root principles. Wherein does the difference in material consist? How much material is common to all the outlines on the same subject? Is this common material made of essential or non-essential facts?

- II. Find some simplifying device such as the one suggested for the reaper and binder, for any of the following mechanisms, and indicate how you would relate the parts of the machine to the device.
- 1. A concrete mixer.
  - 2. A derrick.
  - 3. A vacuum cleaner.
  - 4. A lawn-mower.
  - 5. A rock-crusher.
  - 6. A pile-driver.
  - 7. A Dover egg-beater.
  - 8. A hay-tedder.
  - 9. A printing-press.
  - 10. An apple-sorter.
- III. State, in *one complete sentence*, the nucleus from which a theme treatment of any of the following subjects would grow. Be sure that this sentence is sufficiently inclusive, has much meat. Mr. Wilson, in writing of the National House of Representatives, evidently had a sentence like the following in mind: "The House of Representatives is an efficient business body the work of which is accomplished largely through committees, and centralized round a powerful speaker."
- 1. The operation of a sewing machine.
  - 2. The explanation of a pulley.
  - 3. The explanation of a cream separator.
  - 4. The principle of the fireless cooker.
  - 5. The principle of the steam turbine.
  - 6. The principle of the bread mixer.
  - 7. The principle of the piano.
  - 8. The principle of the electric car.
  - 9. The principle of the steel construction of sky scrapers.
  - 10. The principle of the metal lathe.
  - 11. The Interstate Commerce Commission.
  - 12. The college fraternity.
  - 13. A national political convention.
  - 14. The Roman Catholic Church, or any other church.
  - 15. The modern orchestra.
  - 16. The Boy Scout Movement.
  - 17. The International Workers of the World.
  - 18. An American State University.
  - 19. A stock exchange.
  - 20. A national bank.
  - 21. How to play tennis.
  - 22. How to detect the tricks of fakirs at county fairs.
  - 23. How to make a symmetrical load of hay.
  - 24. How to run "the quarter."

- 25. How to pack for camping.
- 26. How to rush a freshman.
- 27. How to make money from poultry.
- 28. How to make a successful iron casting.
- 29. How to plan a railroad terminal yard.
- 30. How to use the slide rule.

**IV. The Track Layer (page 166).**

1. In view of the fact that the text suggests avoidance of a beginning list of parts of a machine, what is your opinion of the list in this selection? Could the explanation have been made as well without this list? Better?
2. Would this explanation be as well done if the author began with hearing the machine at a distance, and then approached, described the appearance of the machine, and finally stated its principle? Does the method, the order, have any really close connection with the value of the explanation?

**V. Write themes on the following subjects, bearing in mind that the *facts* of the subject remain constant even though the readers may vitally differ and therefore need widely varying treatments.**

1. The adding machine.
  - a. For a business man who wishes to reduce expenses in his office.
  - b. For a woman who has worked painfully at figures in an office for thirty years and regards the process of "figuring" as sacred.
  - c. For a person who says, "I just never could get figures straight anyway!"
2. The typewriter.
  - a. For a person who complains that people have n't brains enough to read his "perfectly plain handwriting."
  - b. For a person who thinks that the clicking sound of the machine will be terribly disagreeable.
  - c. For an old gentleman who for years clung to the use of a quill, and has only within a few years brought himself to use a fountain pen.
3. Fruit farming (limited to one kind of fruit).
  - a. For a city man of not too robust health but of considerable wealth who wishes a reasonably quiet pleasant existence.
  - b. For a young man who has just inherited 150 acres of fine apple land but is half inclined toward becoming a bank clerk.
  - c. For a person who has read Burroughs and thinks that the poetic appeal of fruit trees and birds must be delightful.
4. The Process of Canvassing for a Book.
  - a. For a college student who wishes to make much money.
  - b. For a person who always buys books from canvassers and whom you wish to enlighten as to their methods.

- c. For a young man who possesses a glib tongue which he wishes to turn to good financial use.
  - 5. The Commission Form of City Government.
    - a. For a man who wishes to improve the régime in his city.
    - b. For a person who contends that our municipal government is hopelessly behind that of European cities.
    - c. For a politician of doubtful character who has served several terms as mayor under the old system.
  - 6. The Hague Peace Conference.
    - a. For a person who declares that international coöperation is impossible.
    - b. For a person who is seeking a precedent for a "League to Enforce Peace."
    - c. For a militarist.
- VI. Compare the two selections which follow, and determine which is the more interesting, and why. Would the kind of treatment that the second receives be fitting for the first? Rewrite each, in condensed form, in the style of the other.

It will, I believe, be more interesting if, instead of talking of launches in general, I describe the launch of the great British battleship *Neptune* which I witnessed recently at the famous naval dock-yard at Portsmouth.

It will, however, be necessary to commence with a short general explanation. As we already know, the keel of a vessel is laid upon a row of blocks, and from the keel it grows upwards plate by plate. As it thus gets higher and higher it has to be supported laterally, in order to keep it in an upright position, and for this reason strong props or shores are placed along the sides at frequent intervals. Now it is easy to see that the vessel cannot move until these shores have been taken away, yet, if they are removed, what is to prevent the ship from falling over?

This dilemma is avoided by putting the vessel on what is called a cradle. It is to my mind best described by comparison with a sledge. A sledge has a body on which the passenger or load is placed, while under it are runners, smooth strips which will slide easily over the slippery surfaces of the snow, and finally there is the smooth snow to form the track.

In the same way the ship, when it starts on its first journey, rests upon the body of the cradle, which in turn rests upon "runners" which slide upon the "launching ways," the counterpart of the smooth snow.

These "ways" are long narrow timber stages, one on each side of the ship and parallel with the keel. They are several feet wide, and long enough to reach right down into the water. Needless to say, they are very strong, and the upper surface is quite smooth so that

the runners will slide easily, and there is a raised edge on each to keep them from gliding off sideways. Grease and oil are plentifully supplied to these ways, and then the "runners" are placed upon them. These, too, are formed of massive baulks of timber, and their underside is made smooth so as to present as good a sliding surface as possible to the "ways." Finally upon the runners is built up the body of the cradle itself. Timber is again the material, and it is carefully fitted to the underside of the ship so that, when the weight is transferred from the blocks under it to the cradle, it will rest evenly and with the least possible strain; for it must be borne in mind that a ship is designed to be supported on the soft even bed which the water affords and not on a timber framework. There is a danger, therefore, of the hull becoming distorted while resting upon the cradle, so it is stayed and strengthened inside with temporary timber work.

So far all seems easy, but the weight of the ship is still on the blocks, while the cradle is as yet doing practically nothing. There remains the stupendous task of transferring the weight of the ship, thousands of tons, from one to the other. How can it be done?

This is left until the morning of the day appointed for the launch, and it is then done by a method which is quite startling in its simplicity. The power to be obtained by means of a wedge has been known for ages, yet it is that simple device which enables this seemingly impossible work to be accomplished with ease.

Between the "runners," as I have termed them, and the body of the cradle itself, a large number of wedges are inserted, perhaps as many as a thousand. But of course they cannot be driven one at a time, as a single wedge would simply crush into the timber without lifting the cradle at all; they are therefore all driven at once. An army of men are employed, and they all stand with heavy hammers ready to strike. At the sound of a gong a thousand hammers fall as one, and a thousand wedges begin to raise the ship with the cradle on it. Then a second sound on the gong, and a second time a thousand hammers strike together; then again and again, until all the wedges have been driven home and the weight of the ship has been lifted partly off the blocks on to the cradle.

Then the blocks are gradually removed, a proceeding which is rendered easy by the fact that it has for one of the layers which compose it a pair of wedges which can be easily withdrawn so as to leave all the other timbers free. There are an enormous number of these blocks to be removed from under a big ship, and the operation takes considerable time. They are removed, too, gradually, so that the whole of the weight of the ship, which will ultimately rest upon the cradle, may come on to it by degrees, and so if there should be anything wrong — with the cradle, for instance — the operation of removing the blocks could be suspended before it had gone too far;

for the engineer, though he sometimes does very daring things, and none more daring than the launching of a big ship, is really a very cautious man, and always likes to keep on the safe side.

At Portsmouth there is an old custom in connection with the removal of the blocks from under the ship which prescribes that the men shall sing at their work.

This is a matter in which they take a pride, so that while the blocks are being taken away sounds of excellent male voice part-singing float out from the invisible "choir" underneath the ship.

The removal of the blocks is so arranged that it shall be completed just before the time for the ceremony, since when they are all gone the ship is all "alive," straining, as it were, to get away down the slippery ways into the water, and a very slight mishap would be sufficient to bring about a premature launch. Indeed, during these last moments the vessel is only held back by a few blocks left under the bow — it must be understood that a ship commences its career by entering the water *backwards* — and one timber prop on each side, called the "dog-shores."

These "dog-shores" are, in effect, huge catches which keep the ship from moving, and which are released at the right moment by the falling of two weights.

The launch of the *Neptunes* took place at eleven o'clock in the morning, and for an hour or so previously spectators had been assembling. Picture to yourself a great steel vessel — merely the hull, of course — 500 feet long and as high as a three-story house. Close to the bow is a gaily decorated platform, crowded with people, while thousands occupy stands on either side, and still more stand on the open ground and on every point from which a view can be obtained. On the bow of the vessel there is hung a festoon of flowers with a bottle of wine concealed in it, while round the bow passes a cord, the ends of which are supporting the weights which hang just over the dog-shores.

As the clock strikes, the lady who is to perform the ceremony, a royal duchess, arrives upon the scene and takes her place on the elevated platform close to the bow of the ship. A short religious service is conducted by the chaplain of the dockyard assisted by the choir of the dockyard church, and then the duchess leans forward, takes hold of the wine bottle suspended by the floral festoon, draws it towards her and lets it go again. As the bottle swings back and dashes to pieces against the steel stem of the vessel, she says, "Success to the *Neptune* and all who sail in her."

Then an official steps forward with a mallet and chisel. The former he hands to the lady, while the latter he holds with its edge upon the cord. Now is the critical moment, and among all the thousands of spectators not a sound is to be heard. A few blows of the mallet upon the chisel and the cord is severed; exactly at the same

moment the two weights fall, the dog-shores are knocked out of the way, and the great vessel begins slowly and majestically to glide down to the water. The few remaining blocks under the bow are pulled over by the motion of the ship, and fall with a crash, which is soon drowned by the cheers of the people and sounds of patriotic airs played by the band.

There are a large number of sailors and workmen upon the ship, and as soon as she is in the water they drop the anchors and bring her to rest, while tugs rush to her and take her in tow to the dock where she is to be fitted up.

But what becomes of the cradle? It is made in two halves, the part on each side being connected to that on the other by chains passing under the keel, and in these chains there is a connection which can be released by pulling a cord from the deck of the ship. When the ship has reached the water, therefore, and the cradle has done its work, the cord is pulled and the two halves of the cradle, being mainly of timber, float off, to be captured and towed back to shore.

The grease upon the launching ways and cradle is melted by the heat due to friction, and much of it is to be found floating upon the water immediately after the launch, so numbers of small boats immediately put off and men with scoops collect it.<sup>1</sup>

The word *head* affords a good example of radiation. We may regard as the central meaning that with which we are most familiar, — a part of the body. From this we get (1) the "top" of anything, literally or figuratively, whether it resembles a head in shape (as the head of a cane, a pin, or a nail), or merely in position of preëminence (as the head of a page, the head of the table, the head of the hall); (2) figuratively, "leadership," or concretely, "a leader" (the head of the army, the head of the school); (3) the "head" of a coin (the side on which the ruler's head is stamped); (4) the "source" of a stream, "spring," "well-head," "fountain-head"; (5) the hydraulic sense ("head of water"); (6) a "promontory," as *Flamborough Head, Beechy Head*; (7) "an armed force," a "troop" (now obsolete); (8) a single person or individual, as in "five head of cattle"; (9) the "main points," as in "the heads of a discourse" (also "notes" of such points); (10) mental power, "intellectual force."

Here again there is no reason for deriving any of our ten special senses from any other. They are mutually independent, each proceeding in a direct line from the central primary meaning of *head*.

The main process of radiation is so simple that it is useless to multiply examples. We may proceed, therefore, to scrutinize its operations in certain matters of detail.

In the first place, we observe that any derived meaning may itself

<sup>1</sup> Thomas W. Corbin: *Engineering of To-day*. By courtesy of the publishers, Seeley, Service & Co., London.

become the source of one or more further derivatives. It may even act as a center whence such derivatives radiate in considerable numbers, precisely as if it were the primary sense of the word.

Thus, in the case of *head*, the sense of the "top" of anything immediately divides into that which resembles a human head in (1) shape, or (2) position merely. And each of these senses may radiate in several directions. Thus from (1) we have the head of a pin, of a nail, of a barrel, of an ulcer, "a bud" (in Shakespeare); from (2) the head of a table, of a hall, of a printed page, of a subscription-list. And some of these meanings may also be further developed. "The head of the table," for instance, may indicate position, or may be transferred to the person who sits in that position. From the head of an ulcer, we have the disagreeable figure (so common that its literal meaning is quite forgotten), "to come to a head," and Prospero's "Now does my project gather to a head," in *The Tempest*.

Sense No. 2, the "forefront" of a body of persons, the "leader," cannot be altogether separated from No. 1. But it may come perfectly well from the central meaning. In every animal but man the head actually precedes the rest of the body as the creature moves. At all events, the sense of "leadership" or "leader" (it is impossible to keep them apart) has given rise to an infinity of particular applications and idiomatic phrases. The head of a procession, of an army, of a class, of a revolt, of a "reform movement," of a new school of philosophy — these phrases all suggest personal leadership, but in different degrees and very various relations to the persons who are led, so that they may all be regarded as radiating from a common center.

By a succession of radiations the development of meanings may become almost infinitely complex. No dictionary can ever register a tithe of them, for, so long as a language is alive, every speaker is constantly making new specialized applications of its words. Each particular definition in the fullest lexicon represents, after all, not so much a single meaning as a little group of connected ideas, unconsciously agreed upon in a vague way by the consensus of those who use the language. The limits of the definition must always be vague, and even within these limits there is large scope for variety.

If the speaker does not much transgress these limits in a given instance, we understand his meaning. Yet we do not and cannot see all the connotations which the word has in the speaker's mind. He has given us a conventional sign or symbol for his idea. Our interpretation of the sign will depend partly on the context or the circumstances, partly on what we know of the speaker, and partly on the association which we ourselves attach to the word in question. These considerations conduct us, once more, to the principle on which we have so often insisted. Once more we are forced to admit

that language, after all, is essentially poetry. For it is the function of poetry, as Sainte-Beuve says, not to tell us everything, but to set our imaginations at work: "La poésie ne consiste pas à tout dire, mais à tout faire rêver."

Besides the complexity that comes from successive radiation, there is a perpetual exchange of influences among the meanings themselves. Thus when we speak of a man as "the intellectual head of a movement," *head* means "leader" (No. 8), but has also a suggestion of the tenth sense, "mind." If two very different senses of a word are present to the mind at the same moment, the result is a pun, intentional or unintentional. If the senses are subtly related, so that they enforce or complement each other, our phrase becomes imaginatively forcible, or, in other words, recognizable poetry as distinguished from the unconscious poetry of language.

So, too, the sudden re-association of a derived sense with the central meaning of a word may produce a considerable change in effect. *Head* for "leader" is no longer felt as metaphorical, and so of several other of the radiating senses of this word. Yet it may, at any moment, flash back to the original meaning, and be revivified as a conscious metaphor for the nonce. "He is not the *head* of his party, but their mask"; "The leader fell, and the crowd was a body without a *head*."

Radiation is a very simple process, though its results may become beyond measure complicated. It consists merely in divergent specialization from a general center. It is always easy to follow the spokes back to the hub.<sup>1</sup>

Write a theme on any of the following subjects, adapting your style to the character of the subject — formal or informal, impersonal or personal, etc.

In each of these subjects discover the root principle which will serve as your controlling object, and state it in a sentence. State also how you expect to make the theme interesting.

- 1. How to handle a swarm of bees.
- 2. How a publicity campaign is managed.
- 3. The process of inoculation.
- 4. The process of fumigation.
- 5. How an ingot of steel is made.
- 6. The physiological process of stimulation.
- 7. The process of reforming criminals.
- 8. How to break into society.
- 9. How to memorize a long sonata.
- 10. How to make a well.
- 11. The process of civilization.

<sup>1</sup> Greenough and Kittredge: *Words and Their Ways in English Speech*. By courtesy of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, New York City.

12. How a locomotive is assembled.
  13. How a torpedo is launched.
  14. How good literary taste is acquired.
  15. The process of naturalization.
  16. The process of simplification in language.
  17. The process of organizing a "clean up" campaign.
  18. How big steel beams are put in place on the twentieth story.
  19. The process of fertilization of land.
  20. The process of inoculating land for alfalfa.
  21. The process of making a trial balance sheet.
  22. How to audit the accounts of a club, store, treasurer, or organization.
  23. The process of pasteurization.
  24. The process of modulation in music.
  25. How to fire a blast furnace.
- VII. Write the material contained in the explanations of the blow-pipe and the hydraulic cartridge (page 161) in the more picturesque form of a personal experience, showing how you, or some one, used the mechanism for a particular purpose. Which method of treatment is more effective? Why? Would you be willing to lay down a general rule about the method of treatment? If not, why not?
- VIII. Use the method employed to explain dredges (page 170) to write a theme that shall discriminate briefly the various types of the following :
1. Valves.
  2. Tractors.
  3. Egg-beaters.
  4. Styles in landscape painting.
  5. Systems of bookkeeping.
  6. Methods of learning a foreign language.
  7. Churns.
  8. Methods of packing apples.
- IX. In the following selection you will find an account of how an engineering problem was solved. With this as a model, write an account of any of the following:
1. The Shoshone, or Keokuk, or Roosevelt Dam.
  2. The Panama Canal.
  3. The Cape Cod Canal.
  4. The Chicago Drainage Canal.
  5. The Chicago Breakwater.
  6. The Galveston Sea Wall.
  7. The Key West Railroad.
  8. The Mississippi Levees.
  9. An Army Cantonment.
  10. A Shipyard.

11. A Big City Subway.  
12. Some Development in Your Own Town.

The construction of the reservoirs and aqueduct for bringing a daily supply of five hundred million gallons into New York from the Catskill Mountains has involved engineering work of great magnitude, and in some cases of considerable perplexity and difficulty. As it turned out, the most serious problem was encountered at the Hudson River, where the engineers had to determine upon the best method for conducting the water past that great natural obstacle.

Four alternative plans were considered: first, to lay steel pipes in trenches dredged across the river bottom; second, to drive a tunnel through the glacial deposit in the river bottom; third, to carry the aqueducts across the river on a bridge; and lastly, to build a huge inverted siphon at a depth sufficient to bring it entirely within the solid underlying rock. The last was the plan adopted.

To determine the depth and character of the rock, fifteen vertical holes were drilled from the surface of the river, and two inclined holes, of different degrees of inclination, were driven from each shore. Six of the vertical holes reached bed rock, and one of them in the center of the river reached an ultimate depth of 768 feet, when it had to be abandoned without reaching bed rock. This boring developed the fact that the present Hudson River flows in an old glacial gorge which has been filled up with deposits of silt, sand, gravel, clay, and boulders to a depth of over 800 feet.

Now it was realized that a deep-pressure tunnel, to be perfectly reliable, must lie in absolutely sound and unfissured rock; and since it was impossible to test the rock by vertical borings made from scows anchored in the river, the engineers determined to explore the underlying material by means of inclined borings driven from either shore. Accordingly, two shafts were sunk to a depth of between two and three hundred feet, and from them two diamond drill borings were started, which ultimately crossed at a depth of 1500 feet below the surface of the river. A good rock was found at that level. To make the survey more reliable, a second pair of holes was drilled at a less inclination, which crossed at a depth of 950 feet below the river surface. The rock was found to be perfectly satisfactory, and such water as was found was limited in extent and due to well-understood geologic causes.

It was therefore determined to sink the east and west shafts to a depth of from 1150 to 1200 feet below ground surface, and connect them by a tunnel 3022 feet in length at a depth of 1100 feet below the river surface. The shafts have been sunk, that on the

West Shore to 1153 feet, the East Shore shaft to 1185 feet, and the boring of the tunnel toward the center of the river has made good progress, the easterly section having advanced at the present writing about 260 feet, and the westerly section 170 feet from their respective shafts. Both the shafts and the tunnel will be lined with a high grade of Portland cement concrete which will give them a finished internal diameter of 14 feet. The aqueduct reaches the Hudson River at an elevation of 400 feet above mean water level. Hence the total head of water is about 1500 feet, and the total pressure on each square foot of the tunnel is  $46\frac{1}{2}$  tons, which is balanced with a wide margin of safety by the weight of the superincumbent mass of rock, silt, and water.<sup>1</sup>

- X. In the following account of an emotional and mental process what root principle do you find? Does the author show traces of influence from the intended readers, the American public? Does the author take too much for granted in the reader, or not enough? Does she show tact in approaching the reader? Write the account in an impersonal, abstract way, as if you were reporting "a case" for a statistician, and then give your estimate of the two. What light does your estimate throw upon the advice to make the actors in a process specific?

How long would you say, wise reader, it takes to make an American? By the middle of my second year in school I had reached the sixth grade. When, after the Christmas holidays, we began to study the life of Washington, running through a summary of the Revolution, and the early days of the Republic, it seemed to me that all my reading and study had been idle until then. The reader, the arithmetic, the song book, that had so fascinated me until now, became suddenly sober exercise books, tools wherewith to hew a way to the source of inspiration. When the teacher read to us out of a big book with many bookmarks in it, I sat rigid with attention in my little chair, my hands tightly clasped on the edge of my desk; and I painfully held my breath, to prevent sighs of disappointment escaping, as I saw the teacher skip the parts between bookmarks. When the class read, and it came my turn, my voice shook and the book trembled in my hands. I could not pronounce the name of George Washington without a pause. Never had I prayed, never had I chanted the songs of David, never had I called upon the Most Holy, in such utter reverence and worship as I repeated the simple sentences of my child's story of the patriot. I gazed with adoration at the portraits of George and Martha Washington, till I could see them with my eyes shut.

<sup>1</sup> "The Catskill Water Supply Tunnel," in the *Scientific American*, vol. 104. By courtesy of The Scientific American Publishing Company.

And whereas formerly my self-consciousness had bordered on conceit, and I thought myself an uncommon person, parading my schoolbooks through the streets, and swelling with pride when a teacher detained me in conversation, now I grew humble all at once, seeing how insignificant I was beside the Great.

As I read about the noble boy who would not tell a lie to save himself from punishment, I was for the first time truly repentant of my sins. Formerly I had fasted and prayed and made sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, but it was more than half play, in mimicry of my elders. I had no real horror of sin, and I knew so many ways of escaping punishment. I am sure my family, my neighbors, my teachers in Polotzk — all my world, in fact — strove together, by example and precept, to teach me goodness. Saintliness had a new incarnation in about every third person I knew. I did respect the saints, but I could not help seeing that most of them were a little bit stupid, and that mischief was much more fun than piety. Goodness, as I had known it, was respectable, but not necessarily admirable. The people I really admired, like my Uncle Solomon, and Cousin Rachel, were those who preached the least and laughed the most. My sister Frieda was perfectly good, but she did not think the less of me because I played tricks. What I loved in my friends was not inimitable. One could be downright good if one really wanted to. One could be learned if one had books and teachers. One could sing funny songs and tell anecdotes if one traveled about and picked up such things, like one's uncles and cousins. But a human being strictly good, perfectly wise, and unfailingly valiant, all at the same time, I had never heard or dreamed of. This wonderful George Washington was as inimitable as he was irreproachable. Even if I had never, never told a lie, I could not compare myself to George Washington; for I was not brave — I was afraid to go out when snowballs whizzed — and I could never be the First President of the United States.

So I was forced to revise my own estimate of myself. But the twin of my new-born humility, paradoxical as it may seem, was a sense of dignity I had never known before. For if I found that I was a person of small consequence, I discovered at the same time that I was more nobly related than I had ever supposed. I had relatives and friends who were notable people by the old standards, — I had never been ashamed of my family, — but this George Washington, who died long before I was born, was like a king in greatness, and he and I were Fellow Citizens. There was a great deal about Fellow Citizens in the patriotic literature we read at this time; and I knew from my father how he was a Citizen, through the process of naturalization, and how I also was a citizen, by virtue of my relation to him. Undoubtedly I was a Fellow Citizen,

and George Washington was another. It thrilled me to realize what sudden greatness had fallen on me; and at the same time it sobered me, as with a sense of responsibility. I strove to conduct myself as befitted a Fellow Citizen.

Before books came into my life, I was given to star-gazing and day-dreaming. When books were given me, I fell upon them as a glutton pounces on his meat after a period of enforced starvation. I lived with my nose in a book, and took no notice of the alternations of the sun and stars. But now, after the advent of George Washington and the American Revolution, I began to dream again. I strayed on the common after school instead of hurrying home to read. I hung on fence rails, my pet book forgotten under my arm, and gazed off to the yellow-streaked February sunset, and beyond, and beyond. I was no longer the central figure of my dreams; the dry weeds in the lane crackled beneath the tread of Heroes.

What more could America give a child? Ah, much more! As I read how the patriots planned the Revolution, and the women gave their sons to die in battle, and the heroes led to victory, and the rejoicing people set up the Republic, it dawned on me gradually what was meant by *my country*. The people all desiring noble things, and striving for them together, defying their oppressors, giving their lives for each other — all this it was that made *my country*. It was not a thing that I *understood*; I could not go home and tell Frieda about it, as I told her other things I learned at school. But I knew one could say "my country" and *feel* it, as one felt "God" or "myself." My teacher, my schoolmates, Miss Dillingham, George Washington himself could not mean more than I when they said "my country," after I had once felt it. For the Country was for all the Citizens, and I *was a Citizen*. And when we stood up to sing "America," I shouted the words with all my might. I was in very earnest proclaiming to the world my love for my new-found country.

"I love thy rocks and rills,  
Thy woods and templed hills."

Boston Harbor, Crescent Beach, Chelsea Square — all was hallowed ground to me. As the day approached when the school was to hold exercises in honor of Washington's Birthday, the halls resounded at all hours with the strains of patriotic songs; and I, who was a model of the attentive pupil, more than once lost my place in the lesson as I strained to hear, through closed doors, some neighboring class rehearsing "The Star-Spangled Banner." If the doors happened to open, and the chorus broke out unveiled —

"O! say, does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?"

delicious tremors ran up and down my spine, and I was faint with suppressed enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup>

Write an account of any of the following processes *as processes*.

1. The high school "star" learns in college that other bright people exist.
2. The first realization of death.
3. Becoming loyal to a school.
4. Discovering pride of ancestry.
5. Finding that classical music is interesting.
6. A despised person becomes, on acquaintance, delightful.
7. Becoming reconciled to a new town, or system of government, or catalogue system in a library.
8. Learning that not everything was discovered by an American.
9. Becoming aware that there is a life of thought.
10. Becoming reconciled to a great loss of money or friends.
11. Deciding upon a new wall-paper.
12. Fitting into the town circles after a year away at college.
13. Discovering that some beliefs of childhood must be abandoned.
14. Perceiving that you really agree with some one with whom you have been violently squabbling.
15. The literary person finds attractiveness in engineering and agriculture — and vice versa.
16. Working out a practical personal philosophy of life.
17. Finding a serious motive in life.
18. Determining upon a tactful approach to a "touchy" person.
19. Acquiring the college point of view in place of the high-school attitude.
20. Discovering one's provincialism.
21. Discovering one's racial or national loyalty.
22. Finding out that the world does not depend on any individual, but goes ahead, whether he lives or dies.

<sup>1</sup> Mary Antin: *The Promised Land*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

## CHAPTER VI

### CRITICISM

Few of us pass a day without answering such questions as, "What do you think of the Hudson car?" or, "How did Kreisler's playing strike you?" or, "What is your opinion of the work of Thackeray or Alice Brown or Booth Tarkington?" or, "Do you like the X disc harrow?" When we are among intimate friends we give our opinions, based on our personal reaction to the subject of inquiry or on our impartial estimate of it as an automobile, a musical performance, a collection of books, or an agricultural machine. Many of us give a large space in our conversation to such estimates on all conceivable subjects. And, for purposes of insignificant conversation, there is no reason why we should not. Accused of making "Criticism" in the formal sense, however, many of us should recoil with terrified denial. But that is exactly what we are doing, whether we praise or blame, accept or reject, so long as we base our opinion on sincere personal or sound principles, we criticize. *For criticism is the attempt to estimate the worth of something — object or idea — either abstractly on a basis of principles and relations, or personally on the basis of our reactions to the subject of criticism.* That is, we may, for example, criticize the roads of New York State on the basis of what a road is for and how well these roads serve their purpose, or we may take as basis the inspiration, the keen ecstasy that we feel as we skim over the smooth boulevard. So long as our notions of good roads are sound, so long as we react sensibly, with balance, to the smooth rounding way, we make good criticism, we judge the worth of the subject of criticism and find it either good or bad.

**It is to be noted that this criticism is something more than**

mere comment, than mere off-hand remarks. The old saying is, "Anybody can say *something* about *anything*!" An off-hand utterance *may* tell the truth; we cannot be sure that it will. Only when we have a well-considered basis of either principle or personal feeling can we be at all certain of our opinions.

Now the range in which our opinions, our criticisms, may be expressed, is as wide as human thought and accomplishment. We sometimes think of criticism as being confined to literature and art, and speak of literary criticism, musical criticism, dramatic criticism, and art criticism, as if these were all. The term criticism has actually been so restricted in common practice that unless otherwise noted it is taken for granted as applying to these subjects. But criticism is much more comprehensive than such restriction indicates: any object or subject is capable of criticism. Just as we might arrive at the conclusion that Booth Tarkington's stories about Penrod are either good or bad, so we might say that a make of piano, a type of bridle, a new kind of fertilizer, a method of bookkeeping, a recipe for angel cake is good or is sufficient or is valueless. We might have — in fact we do have — Engineering Criticism, Carpenter Criticism, Needle-work Criticism, Poultry Criticism, and as many kinds as there are classes of subjects. In this treatment we shall use the term in this broad sense and include all subjects in our scope. Of course we are to remember that the criticism becomes of more value as the subject of criticism is of more moment: criticism of the drama is nobler, perhaps, than criticism of egg beaters and picture hooks. We must also remember that the less high orders of criticism are neither useless nor undesirable but often most helpful.

#### Requirements demanded of the Critic

Since, then, the brand of the critic is on us all, since we practice the habit, consciously or not, most of the time, and

since the range is so wide, no reason exists why we should be terrified at the thought of writing criticism, of making formal estimate. Certain requirements are demanded, to be sure; not every one can dive into the sea of criticism without making an awkward splash and receiving a reddening smart. But these requirements are in no way beyond the possibility of acquiring by any one who will set himself to the task.

*a. Ability to analyze*

In the first place, a critic must have the power to analyze. We have seen that analysis consists in breaking a subject into its components, in discovering of what it is made. This is the first great necessity in criticizing. You wish, for example, to make a criticism of a new rifle for your friends. It is not enough that you should with gusto enunciate, "It's just great!" "Oh, it's fine, fine and dandy!" "Golly but it's a good one!" Your friends are likely to ask "Why?" or to say, "The gentleman doth protest too much!" If, on the other hand, you remark that the rifle is admirable because of its sights, its general accuracy, its cartridge chamber, its comparative freedom from recoil, then you will be giving your friends definite and useful criticism, for you will have analyzed the virtue of the object into its components. Now this necessity for analysis exists in criticism of literature and art just as in criticism of rifles. Before you can properly estimate the value of a novel or a play you must divide the impression it makes into the various heads, such as emotional power, convincingness in the message of the book or play, truth to life, and whatever heading you may think necessary. Until you do this your impressions, your judgments will of necessity be vague and dim in their outlines, and though they may seem to be comprehensive, will be found actually to be insufficient to give your reader or listener a firm notion of the subject — he will have no nucleus of thought round which his total estimate will

center. As soon, however, as you analyze, and make definite, so soon he will receive real enlightenment. In the following account of the work of James Russell Lowell at the Court of Saint James we find at once this careful breaking of the subject into parts which can be treated definitely. Had the writer merely uttered general impressions of the diplomacy of our ambassador we who read should have been comparatively unhelped.

To those who hold the semi-barbarous notion that one of the duties of a foreign minister is to convey a defiant attitude toward the people to whom he is accredited — that he should stick to his post, to use the popular phrase, "with his back up," and keep the world that he lives in constantly in mind that his countrymen are rough, untamable, and above all things quarrelsome, Mr. Lowell has not seemed a success. But to them we must observe, that they know so little of the subject of diplomacy that their opinion is of no sort of consequence. The aim of diplomacy is not to provoke war, but to keep the peace; it is not to beget irritation, or to keep it alive, but to produce and maintain a pacific temper; not to make disputes hard, but easy, to settle; not to magnify differences of interest or feeling, but to make them seem small; not to win by threats, but by persuasion; not to promote mutual ignorance, but mutual comprehension — to be, in short, the representative of a Christian nation, and not of a savage tribe.

No foreign minister, it is safe to say, has ever done these things so successfully in the same space of time as Mr. Lowell. If it be a service to the United States to inspire Englishmen with respect such as they have never felt before for American wit and eloquence and knowledge, and thus for American civilization itself, nobody has rendered this service so effectually as he has done. They are familiar almost *ad nauseam* with the material growth of the United States, with the immense strides which the country has made and is making in the production of things to eat, drink, and wear. What they know least of, and had had most doubts about, is American progress in acquiring those gifts and graces which are commonly supposed to be the inheritance of countries that have left the ruder beginnings of national life far behind, and have had cen-

turies of leisure for art, literature, and science. Well, Mr. Lowell has disabused them. As far as blood and training go, there is no more genuine American than he. He went to England as pure a product of the American soil as ever landed there, and yet he at once showed English scholars that in the field of English letters they had nothing to teach him. In that higher political philosophy which all Englishmen are now questioning so anxiously, he has spcken not only as a master, but almost as an oracle. In the lighter but still more difficult arts, too, which make social gatherings delightful and exciting to intellectual men, in the talk which stimulates strong brains and loosens eloquent tongues, he has really reduced the best-trained and most loquacious London diners-out to abashed silence. In fact, he has, in captivating English society,—harder, perhaps, to cultivate, considering the vast variety of culture it contains, than any other society in the world,—in making every Englishman who met him wish that he were an Englishman too, performed a feat such as no diplomatist, we believe, ever performed before.<sup>1</sup>

### b. *Knowledge of the General Field*

- ✓ Besides the ability to analyze the critic must have some knowledge of the general field in which the subject lies. For a man who has never thought about musical form to attempt criticism of a sonata is foolish — he can at best merely comment. It is this fact that vitiates much of the cracker-barrel criticism of the country store — subjects are estimated about which the critic is largely ignorant. When an uneducated person makes shrewd comment, as he often does, on a play, he will usually be found to have criticized a character such as he has known or the outcome of a situation the like of which he is familiar with rather than the play as a whole. Now perfect criticism would demand perfect knowledge, but since that is impossible, a good working knowledge will suffice, the wider the better. Knowledge of the general principles of piano playing will enable a critic

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Polak: *Fifty Years of American Idealism*. Houghton Mifflin Company. By courtesy of *The Nation*.

to estimate, in the large, the work of a performer; he cannot criticize minutely until he has added more detailed knowledge to his mental equipment.

#### c. Common Sense

However much knowledge and ability to analyze a critic may have, he is a will-o'-the-wisp unless he have common sense and balance. Since a critic is in many ways a guide, he must guard as sacred his ability to see the straight road and to refuse the appeal of by-paths, however attractive. As critic, you must not be overawed by a name, be it of artist or manufacturer, nor allow much crying of wares in the street to swerve you from your fixed determination to judge and estimate only on the worth of the subject *as you find it*. This is far from meaning that the critic should give no weight to the opinions of others; you should always do that; but, having examined the subject, and knowing your opinions, you should then speak the truth as you see it. Your one final desire should be to go to the heart of the matter accurately, and then to state this clearly. And just as you do not blindly accept a great name, so do not be wheedled by gloss and appearance, but keep a steady aim for the truth.

#### d. Open-mindedness

Finally, this balance, this passion for the truth, will lead the critic to strive always for open-mindedness. "I would rather be a man of disinterested taste and liberal feeling," wrote Hazlitt, "to see and acknowledge truth and beauty wherever I found it, than a man of greater and more original genius, to hate, envy, and deny all excellence but my own. . . ." And he was right when he said it: the willingness to accept a new idea or object if it is worthy, whether it go against the critic's personal desires or not, is one of the great qualities that he will find indispensable. "I never heard

of such a thing!" is not a sufficient remark to condemn the thing. In fact, almost a sufficient answer to such an exclamation would be, "Well, what of it?" or, "'T is time you did."

### Methods of Criticism

Armed with open-mindedness, then, with balance and common sense, with knowledge of the field, and with ability to analyze, you are ready to begin. What method shall you pursue? Though no absolutely sharp line can be drawn between kinds of criticism, we may treat of three that are fairly distinct: the historical method, the method by standards, and the appreciative. In most criticism we are likely to find more than one method employed, often all three. You need not confine yourself to one any more than a carpenter need refuse to use any but one tool, but for purposes of comprehension and presentation we shall keep the three here fairly distinct. We shall examine the three now, briefly, in the order named.

#### a. *The Historical Method*

Suppose that you are asked to criticize one of Cooper's novels, say *The Last of the Mohicans*. You find in it red men idealized out of the actual, red men such as presumably never existed. You may, then, in disgust throw the book down and damn it with the remark, "The man does not tell the truth!" But you will not thereby have disposed of Cooper. Much better it would be to ask, How came this man to write thus? When did he write? For whom? How did men at that time regard the Indian? In answering these questions you will relate Cooper's novel to the time in which it was written, you will see that before that time the Indian was regarded with unmixed fear, as too often since with contempt, and that at only that time could he have been idealized as Cooper treats him. You would relate the

novel to the whole movement of Sentimentalism, which thought that it believed the savage more noble than civilized man, and you would then, and only then, get a proper perspective. Your original judgment, that Cooper's Indians are not accurate portraits of their kind, would not be modified; for the whole work, however, you would have a new attitude.

In the same way, asked for an opinion of the old-style bicycle with enormous front wheel and tiny trailer, you would not summarily reply, "I prefer a chainless model of my own day," but would discover the place that the old style occupied in the total development of the bicycle, would look at it as related to the preceding absence of any bicycle, and would see that, though it may to-day be useless, in its time it was remarkable. Likewise you will discover that the old three-legged milking stool has been in immemorial use in rude byres and stables, since three points — the ends of the legs — always make a firm plane, which four points do not necessarily do. And one hundred years hence, when a critic comes to judge the nature faking of the early twentieth century, he will relate this sentimental movement to the times in which it appeared, and, though he may well finally be disgusted, he will understand what the thing was and meant, how it came about, what causes produced it.

Illustration of the value of this method is found in the following historical account of the American business man. To a European this man sometimes is inexplicable — until he reads some illuminating setting forth of the facts as here.

As long as the economic opportunities of American life consisted chiefly in the appropriation and improvement of uncultivated land, the average energetic man had no difficulty in obtaining his fair share of the increasing American economic product; but the time came when such opportunities, although still important, were dwarfed by other opportunities, incident to the development of a more mature economic system. These opportunities which were,

of course, connected with the manufacturing, industrial, and technical development of the country, demanded under American conditions a very special type of man — the man who would bring to his task not merely energy, but unscrupulous devotion, originality, daring, and in the course of time a large fund of instructive experience. The early American industrial conditions differed from those of Europe in that they were fluid, and as a result of this instability, extremely precarious. Rapid changes in markets, business methods, and industrial machinery made it difficult to build up a safe business. A manufacturer or a merchant could not secure his business salvation, as in Europe, merely by the adoption of sound conservative methods. The American business man had greater opportunities and a freer hand than his European prototype; but he was too beset by more severe, more unscrupulous, and more dangerous competition. The industrious and thrifty farmer could be fairly sure of a modest competence, due partly to his own efforts, and partly to the increased value of his land in a more populous community; but the business man had no such security. In his case it was war to the knife. He was presented with choice between aggressive daring business operations, and financial insignificance or ruin.

No doubt this situation was due as much to the temper of the American business man as to his economic environment. The business man in seeking to realize his ambitions and purposes was checked neither by government control nor social custom. He had nothing to do and nothing to consider except his own business advancement and success. He was eager, strenuous, and impatient. He liked the excitement and risk of large operations. The capital at his command was generally too small for the safe and conservative operation of his business; and he was consequently obliged to be adventurous, or else to be left behind in the race. He might well be earning enormous profits one year and be skirting bankruptcy the next. Under such a stress conservatism and caution were suicidal. It was the instinct of self-preservation, as well as the spirit of business adventure, which kept him constantly seeking for larger markets, improved methods, or for some peculiar means of getting ahead of his competitors. He had no fortress behind which he could hide and enjoy his conquests. Surrounded as

he was by aggressive enemies and undefended frontiers, his best means of security lay in a policy of constant innovation and expansion. Moreover, even after he had obtained the bulwark of sufficient capital and more settled industrial surroundings, he was under no temptation to quit and enjoy the spoils of his conquests. The social, intellectual, or even the more vulgar pleasures, afforded by leisure and wealth, could bring him no thrill which was anything like as intense as that derived from the exercise of his business ability and power. He could not conquer except by virtue of a strong, tenacious, adventurous, and unscrupulous will; and after he had conquered, this will had him in complete possession. He had nothing to do but to play the game to the end — even though his additional profits were of no living use to him.<sup>1</sup>

In criticizing literature and art this method is often difficult, for we must take into account race, geography, and other conditions. We must see that only in New England, of all the sections of the United States, could Hawthorne have written, that Tolstoi could not have written in Illinois as he did in Russia, that Norse Sagas could not have appeared among tropical peoples, that among the French alone, perhaps, could Racine have come to literary power as he did. And in examining the work of two writers who treat the same subject in general, as Miss Jewett and Mrs. Freeman treat New England life, we shall find the influence of ancestry and environment and training largely determining, on the one hand the quaint fine sunshine, on the other hand the stern hard Puritanism. We shall also have to learn what incidents in an author's life have helped to determine his point of view, how early poverty, or sorrow, or a great experience of protracted agony or joy have made him sympathetic, or how aristocratic breeding and the early introduction into exclusive circles have made him naturally unresponsive to some of the squalor, the sadness of lowly life. We shall perceive that the early removal of Scott to the

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Croly: *The Promise of American Life*. By courtesy of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, New York City.

country began his intense love for Scottish scenery and history, that the bitter laughter of Byron's mother turned part of the poet's nature to gall. In other words, when we are dealing with the exquisitely fine products of impassioned thought we have a difficult task because so many influences mold these thoughts, so many lines of procedure are determined by conditions outside the particular author or artist, all of which must be considered if we wish our work to be really of value. The following illustration shows in brief space the attempt to link a movement in literature to the times in which it appeared, to show that it is naturally a product of the general feeling of the times.

Yet, after all, it is not the theories and formulæ of its followers that differentiate the "new poetry"; the insistence upon certain externalities, the abandonment of familiar traditions, even the new spirit of the language employed, none of these are more than symptoms of the deep inner mood which lies at the roots of the whole tendency. This tendency is in line with the basic trend of our times, and represents the attempt in verse, as in many other branches of expression, to cast off a certain passionate illusionment and approach the universe as it actually is — the universe of science, perhaps, rather than that of the thrilled human heart. This is the kernel of the entire new movement, as has already been clearly pointed out by several writers on the subject.

Everywhere in the new verse we are conscious of a certain objective quality, not the objective quality of *The Divine Comedy* or *Faust*, which is achieved by the symbolic representation in external forms of inner spiritual verities, but an often stark objectivity accomplished by the elimination of the feeling human medium, the often complete absence of any personal reaction. We are shown countless objects and movements, and these objects and movements are glimpsed panoramically from the point of view of outline, color, and interrelation, as through the senses merely; the transfiguring lens of the soul is seldom interposed or felt to be present. To the "new poet" the city street presents itself in terms of a series of sense-impressions vividly realized, a succession of appar-

ently aimless and kaleidoscopic pageantries stripped of their human significance and symbolic import. They have ceased to be signs of a less outward reality, they have become that reality itself — reality apprehended from a singly sensuous standpoint untainted by any of the human emotions of triumph or sorrow, pity or adoration. Love is thus frequently bared of its glamour and death of its peculiar majesty, which may now be regarded as deceitful and fatuous projections of the credulous soul, and not to be tolerated by the sophisticated mood of the new and scientific poet, for it is exactly with these beautiful "sentimentalities" that the analytic mind of science is not concerned.<sup>1</sup>

This method seeks, then, to place a work, whether of art or science or industry, in its place in the whole course of development of such ideas. It examines causes such as commercial demands, general prosperity, war, and only after this examination gives the work its estimate of value.

Now this method may seem uninteresting, dry, dull. Not always does it escape this blame. For it is inevitably impersonal, it looks at the thing perhaps coldly — at least without passion. But in so doing, and in considering the precedents and surroundings of the object of criticism, it largely escapes the superficiality of personal whim, and it avoids silly reaction to unaccustomed things. Much of our empty criticism of customs in dress and manners of architecture such as that of Southern California, of other religions such as those of the Chinese and the Hindoos, would be either done away or somewhat modified if we used this method. One reason, perhaps, why the Goths destroyed the beautiful art works of Rome was the fact that they had not the critical spirit, did not relate these works to their development and race. Of course there were other reasons. By linking the object of criticism to the race as a whole, by seeing how and why it became created, the critic is largely

<sup>1</sup> From *Scribner's Magazine*, September, 1917. By courtesy of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City. Copyright, 1917.

broadened and the reader is kept from superficiality. Moreover, when this method is not too abstractly pursued, it gives to things, after all, a human meaning, for it links them to humanity. That it may be misleading in literature and art is obvious, for a creation may be accounted for in an attractive way as the result of certain forces that had their beginnings in sense and wisdom, and so be made to seem admirable, whereas it really has little worth on a basis of lasting usefulness and significance. But, properly and thoroughly used, this method, even though it gives us an account of a work rather than finally settling its value, scatters away the vague mists of superficial generalization and drives deeply into causes and results.

### *b. The Method by Standards*

As the historical method is generally impersonal, objective, so is the method of criticizing by standards. In using this method we try to determine whether the object of criticism fulfills the demands of its type, whether its quality is high or low. For example, we thus judge a tennis court as to its firm footing, its softness, its retention of court lines, its position as regards the sun. In all these qualities an ideal tennis court would be satisfactory; the question is, is this one. So a headache powder should relieve pain without injuring with evil drugs; if this one does, we shall not condemn it. If the rocks in a landscape painting look like those which the heroic tenor in grand opera hurls aside as so much "puffed wheat," we must condemn the artist, for rocks should look solid. An evangelist should have certain qualities of piety and reverence, and should accomplish certain lasting results; we shall judge Billy Sunday, for example, according to whether he does or does not fulfill these demands. Likewise a lyric poem should have certain qualities of freshness, grace, passion, by which we rate any given lyric.

In fact, we ask, in any given case, does this work do what

such a thing is supposed to do, does it have the qualities that such a thing is supposed to have? And on our answer will depend our judgment. This is the kind of criticism that business men use constantly; they rate a cash system or a form of order blank or an arrangement of counters in a store on the basis of the presence or absence of the qualities that distinguish an ideal system, blank, arrangement. In the following example we have a combination of the historical and the standards methods, finally accounting for and judging the value of the common kinds of cargo steamers.

A trip round any busy seaport will show the reader, if he has not noticed it already, that there are many different types of the ordinary cargo steamer. The feature which displays the difference most noticeably is the arrangement of the structures on the deck, and it may be reasonably asked why there are these varieties, and how it is that a common type has not come to be agreed upon.

The answer to that question is that the differences are not merely arbitrary, but are due to a variety of influences, and it will be interesting to look briefly at these, as the reader will then be able, the next time he sees a cargo steamer, to understand something of the ideas underlying its design.

The early steamers had "flush" decks, which means that the deck ran from end to end without any structures of considerable size upon it; a light bridge was provided, supported upon slender uprights, for "lookouts" purposes, and that was all. On the face of it this seems a very simple and admirable arrangement. It had many disadvantages, however, as we shall see.

In the first place, it permitted a wave to come on board at the bow and sweep right along the deck, often doing great damage. This was mitigated somewhat by building the ships with "shear," that is, with a slope upwards fore and aft, so as to make the ends taller than the middle. That, however, was not sufficient, so ships were built with an upper deck, so that the bow should be high enough to cut through the waves instead of allowing the water to come on board. Owing, however, to the method by which the tonnage of a ship is reckoned, as will be explained later, that had the effect of

adding largely to the tonnage *on which dues have to be paid* without materially increasing the carrying capacity of the ship,

The difficulty was therefore got over in this way. The bow was raised and covered in, forming what is known as a "top-gallant forecastle," which not only had the effect of keeping the water off the deck, but provided better accommodation for the crew as well. That did not provide, however, against a wave overtaking the ship from the rear and coming on board just where the steering wheel was, so a hood or covering over the wheel became usual, called the "poop." Nor did either of these sufficiently protect that very important point, the engine-room. For it needs but a moment's thought to see that there must be openings in the deck over the engines and boilers, and if a volume of water should get down these, it might extinguish the fires and leave the ship helpless, absolutely at the mercy of the waves. The light navigating bridge was therefore developed into a substantial structure the whole width of the ship, surrounding and protecting the engine-and-boiler-room openings, and incidentally providing accommodation for the officers.

Ships of this type answered very well indeed, for if a wave of exceptional size should manage to get over the forecastle, the water fell into the "well" or space between the forecastle and bridge-house, and then simply ran overboard, so that the after part of the ship was kept dry.

Then troubles arose with the loading. The engines, of course, need to be in the center, for they represent considerable weight, which, if not balanced, will cause one end of the ship to float too high in the water. Thus the hold of the ship is divided by the engine-room into two approximately equal parts, but out of the after-hold must be taken the space occupied by the tunnel through which the propeller shaft runs, from the engine to the screw. Thus the capacity of the after-hold becomes less than the forward one, and if both are filled with a homogeneous cargo such as grain (and, as we shall see presently, such a cargo must always entirely fill the hold), the forward part of the ship would float high in the water. The trouble could not be rectified by placing the engines further forward, for then the ship would not float properly when light.

Shipowners overcame this trouble, however, by raising the whole of the "quarter-deck" — the part of the deck, that is, which lies

behind the after end of the "bridge-house" — and by that means they made the after-hold deeper than the other. Thus the commonest type of all, the "raised quarter-deck, well-decker," came into existence, a type of which many examples are to be seen on the sea.<sup>1</sup>

In the following paragraphs Professor Thomas R. Lounsbury of Yale University criticizes the use of final *e* in English words. You will note that he uses a combination of the historical method and the method by standards.

There seems to be something peculiarly attractive to our race in the letter *e*. Especially is this so when it serves no useful purpose. Adding it at random to syllables, and especially to final syllables, is supposed to give a peculiar old-time flavor to the spelling. For this belief there is, to some extent, historic justification. The letter still remains appended to scores of words in which it has lost the pronunciation once belonging to it. Again, it has been added to scores of others apparently to amplify their proportions. We have in our speech a large number of monosyllables. As a sort of consolation to their shrunken condition an *e* has been appended to them, apparently to make them present a more portly appearance. The fancy we all have for this vowel not only recalls the wit but suggests the wisdom of Charles Lamb's exquisite pun upon Pope's line that our race is largely made up of "the mob of gentlemen who write with ease." The belief, in truth, seems to prevail that the final *e* is somehow indicative of aristocracy. In proper names, particularly, it is felt to impart a certain distinction to the appellation, lifting it far above the grade of low associations. It has the crowning merit of uselessness; and in the eyes of many uselessness seems to be regarded as the distinguishing mark of any noble class, either of things or persons. Still, I have so much respect for the rights of property that it seems to me every man ought to have the privilege of spelling and pronouncing his own name in any way he pleases.

The prevalence of this letter at the end of words was largely due to the fact that the vowels, *a*, *o*, and *u* of the original endings were

<sup>1</sup> Thomas W. Corbin: *Engineering of To-day*. By courtesy of the publishers, Seeley, Service & Co., London.

all weakened to it in the break-up of the language which followed the Norman conquest. Hence, it became the common ending of the noun. The further disappearance of the consonant *n* from the original termination of the infinitive extended this usage to the verb. The Anglo-Saxon *tellan* and *helpan*, for instance, after being weakened to *tellen* and *helpen*, became *telle* and *helps*. Words not of native origin fell under the influence of this general tendency and adopted an *e* to which they were in no wise entitled. Even Anglo-Saxon nouns which ended in a consonant — such, for instance, as *hors* and *mūs* and *stán* — are now represented by *horse* and *mouse* and *stone*. The truth is, that when the memory of the earlier form of the word had passed away an *e* was liable to be appended, on any pretext, to the end of it. The feeling still continues to affect us all. Our eyes have become so accustomed to seeing a final *e* which no one thinks of pronouncing, that the word is felt by some to have a certain sort of incompleteness if it be not found there. In no other way can I account for Lord Macaulay's spelling the comparatively modern verb *edit* as *edite*. This seems to be a distinction peculiar to himself.

In the chaos which came over the spelling in consequence of the uncertainty attached to the sound of the vowels, the final *e* was seized upon as a sort of help to indicate the pronunciation. Its office in this respect was announced as early as the end of the sixteenth century; at least, then it was announced that an unsounded *e* at the end of a word indicated that the preceding vowel was long. This, it need hardly be said, is a crude and unscientific method of denoting pronunciation. It is a process purely empirical. It is far removed from the ideal that no letter should exist in a word which is not sounded. Yet, to some extent, this artificial makeshift has been, and still is, a working principle. Were it carried out consistently it might be regarded as, on the whole, serving a useful purpose. But here, as well as elsewhere, the trail of the orthographic serpent is discoverable. Here as elsewhere it renders impossible the full enjoyment of even this slight section of an orthographic paradise. Here, as elsewhere, manifests itself the besetting sin of our spelling, that there is no consistency in the application of any principle. Some of our most common verbs violate the rule

(if rule it can be called), such as *have, give, love, are, done.* In these the preceding vowel is not long but short. There are further large classes of words ending in *ile, ine, ie, ive*, where this final *e* would serve to mislead the inquirer as to the pronunciation had he no other source of information than the spelling.

Still, in the case of some of these words, the operation of this principle has had, and is doubtless continuing to have, a certain influence. Take, for instance, the word *hostile*. In the early nineteenth century, if we can trust the most authoritative dictionaries, the word was regularly pronounced in England as if spelled hós-tl. So it is to-day in America. But the influence of the final *e* has tended to prolong, in the former country, the sound of the preceding *i*. Consequently, a usual, and probably the usual, pronunciation there is hos-tile. We can see a similar tendency manifested in the case of several other adjectives. A disposition to give many of them the long diphthongal sound of the *i* is frequently displayed in the pronunciation of such words as *agile, docile, ductile, futile, infantile*. Save in the case of the last one of this list, the dictionaries once gave the *ile* nothing but the sound of *il*; now they usually authorize both ways.

Were the principle here indicated fully carried out, pronunciations now condemned as vulgarisms would displace those now considered correct. In accordance with it, for instance, *engine*, as it is spelled, should strictly have the *i* long. One of the devices employed by Dickens in *Martin Chuzzlewit* to ridicule what he pretended was the American speech was to have the characters pronounce *genuine* as *gen-u-ine*, *prejudice* as *prej-u-dice*, *active* and *native* as *ac-tive* and *na-tive*. Doubtless he heard such pronunciations from some men. Yet, in these instances, the speaker was carried along by the same tendency which in cultivated English has succeeded in turning the pronunciation *hos-tl* into *hos-tile*. Were there any binding force in the application of the rule which imparts to the termination *e* the power of lengthening the preceding vowel, no one would have any business to give to it in the final syllable of the words just specified any other sound than that of "long *i*." The pronunciations ridiculed by Dickens would be the only pronunciations allowable. Accordingly, the way to make the rule universally effective is to drop this final *e* when it does not produce such an

effect. If *genuine* is to be pronounced *gen-u-īn*, so it ought to be spelled.<sup>1</sup>

Now it is evident that unless the critic's standards are fair and sensible, unless they are known to be sound and essential, his criticism is likely to be valueless. If my ideas of the qualities of ideal tennis courts are erratic or queer, my judgment of the individual court will be untrustworthy. Your first duty as critic, then, is to look at your standards. In judging such things as ice-cream freezers, motorcycles, filing systems, fertilizers, rapid-firing guns, and other useful devices, you will find no great difficulty in choosing your standards. When you come to literature and the arts, however, you find a difficult task. For who shall say exactly what a lyric poem shall do? Or who shall bound the field of landscape painting? No sooner does Reynolds begin painting, after he has formulated the laws of his art and stated them with decision, than he violates them all. No sooner did musicians settle just what a sonata must be than a greater musician appeared who transcended the narrower form. Moreover, in the field of literature and the arts we often find great difficulty in surmounting the cast of our individual minds; we like certain types and are unconsciously led to condemn all others. The great critic rises superior to his peculiar likes and prejudices, but most of us are hindered by them. One great benefit to be derived from writing this particular kind of criticism is in gaining humility — humility at the greatness of some of the works of the past, before which, when we really look at them, we are moved to stand uncovered, and humility at the lack of real analysis that we have made before we attempt the criticism, and finally humility at the tremendous effort we must make to write criticism at all worthy of the subjects. But the difficulty of writing such criticism well should make you exert yourself to the utmost to acquire skill before you attempt this form.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Lounsbury: *English Spelling and Spelling Reform*. By courtesy of the publishers, Harper & Brothers, New York City. Copyright.

This method, like the historical, makes against superficiality, for it necessitates real knowledge of the class to which the object of criticism belongs, the purposes of the class, its bearings, and then a sure survey of the individual itself. And in forcing the critic to examine his standards to determine their fairness and soundness it makes against hasty judgment. Properly used, this method should result in something like finality of judgment.

### c. *The Appreciative Method*

There come occasions when you are not primarily interested in the historical significance of the subject of criticism, and when you are indifferent to objective standards, when, in fact, you are almost wholly interested in the *individual* before you, in what it is or in the effect it has on you. You rather *feel* toward it than care to make a cold analysis of it; you are moved by it, are conscious of a personal reaction to it. In such cases you will make use of what is called appreciative criticism. This method consists in interpreting, often for one who does not know the work, the value of the work, the good things in it, either as they appear to one who studies or as they affect the critic. After reading a new book, for example, or attending a concert, or driving a wonderfully smooth running automobile, or watching the team work in a football game, you are primarily interested in the phenomena shown as they are in their picturesque individuality or in your own emotional reaction to them. In the following example George Gissing makes an appreciative criticism of English cooking, not by coldly tracing the historical influences that have made this cooking what it is, nor by subjecting it to certain fixed standards to which admirable cooking should attain, but rather by telling us what English cooking is and by giving us the flavor of his own emotional delight in it.

As so often when my praise has gone forth for things English, I find myself tormented by an after-thought — the reflection that I have praised a time gone by. Now, in this matter of English meat. A newspaper tells me that English beef is non-existent; that the best meat bearing that name has merely been fed up in England for a short time before killing. Well, well; we can only be thankful that the quality is still so good. Real English mutton still exists, I suppose. It would surprise me if any other country could produce the shoulder I had yesterday.

Who knows? Perhaps even our own cookery has seen its best days. It is a lamentable fact that the multitude of English people nowadays never taste roasted meat; what they call by that name is baked in the oven — a totally different thing, though it may, I admit, be inferior only to the right roast. Oh, the sirloin of old times, the sirloin which I can remember, thirty or forty years ago! That was English, and no mistake, and all the history of civilization could show nothing on the tables of mankind to equal it. To clap that joint into a steamy oven would have been a crime unpardonable by gods and men. Have I not with my own eyes seen it turning, turning on the spit? The scent it diffused was in itself a cure for dyspepsia.

It is a very long time since I tasted a slice of boiled beef; I have a suspicion that the thing is becoming rare. In a household such as mine, the "round" is impracticable; of necessity it must be large, altogether too large for our requirements. But what exquisite memories does my mind preserve! The very coloring of a round, how rich it is, yet how delicate, and how subtly varied! The odor is totally different from that of roast beef, and yet it is beef incontestable. Hot, of course, with carrots, it is a dish for a king; but cold it is nobler. Oh, the thin broad slice, with just its fringe of consistent fat!

We are sparing of condiments, but such as we use are the best that man has invented. And we know *how* to use them. I have heard an impatient innovator scoff at the English law on the subject of mustard, and demand why, in the nature of things, mustard should not be eaten with mutton. The answer is very simple; this law has been made by the English palate — which is impeccable. I maintain it is impeccable. Your educated Englishman is an in-

fallible guide to all that relates to the table. "The man of superior intellect," said Tennyson — justifying his love of boiled beef and new potatoes — "knows what is good to eat"; and I would extend it to all civilized natives of our country. We are content with nothing but the finest savours, the truest combinations; our wealth, and happy natural circumstances, have allowed us an education of the palate of which our natural aptitude was worthy. Think, by the bye, of those new potatoes, just mentioned. Our cook, when dressing them, puts into the saucepan a sprig of mint. This is genius. No otherwise could the flavour of the vegetable be so perfectly, yet so delicately, emphasized. The mint is there, and we know it; yet our palate knows only the young potato.<sup>1</sup>

Appreciative criticism may on the one hand approach criticism by standards, since, for example, to praise a pianist for melting his tones one into another implies that such melting is a standard. It may, again, consist largely in telling what the thing *is*, as to say that the Progressive Party was one that looked forward rather than backward, planned reforms for the people, insisted on clean politics, etc. It may, in the third place, consist in giving a transcript of the writer's feelings as he is in the presence of the subject of criticism, as one might picture the reaction of inspiration to a view from a mountain peak, or express his elation in listening to a famous singer, or show his wild enthusiasm as he watches his team slowly fight its way over the goal line. In all three of these cases the criticism answers the question, "What does this work seem to be, what do I find in it, and wherein do I think it is good?" That is appreciative criticism.

Now since you can adequately estimate in this way only when you are aware of the qualities of the subject, the first requirement for success in this kind of criticism is keen and intelligent sympathy with the work, an open-minded, sensible hospitality to ideas and things. If I am quite unmoved by music, I cannot make reliable appreciative criticism of it.

<sup>1</sup> Gissing: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, "Winter." By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

If I have no reaction to the beauty of a big pumping station, when asked for criticism of it, I shall perforce be silent. If my mind is closed to new ideas, I can never "appreciate" a new theory in science, in sociology, in art or in religion.

In the next place, I must refrain from morbid personal effusion. Certain of our sentimental magazines have published, at odd times, extremely personal rhapsodies about symphonies and poems. The listener has been "wafted away," has heard the birdies sing, the brooks come purling over their stones, has seen the moon come swimming through the clouds — but the reader of such criticism need not be too harshly censured if he mildly wonders whether the critic ought not to consult a physician.

Sometimes this fault occurs through the endeavor to make the criticism attractive, one of the strong demands of the appreciative kind. Since the personal note exists throughout, and since you wish to make your reader attracted to the object that you criticize, your writing should be as pleasing as is legitimately possible. Allow yourself full rein to express the beauties of your subject with all the large personal warmth of which you are capable, with as neatly turned expression as you can make, always remembering to keep your balance, to avoid morbidness in any form.

It is in this way that you will give to your criticism one of its most valued qualities, appealing humanness. Less final, perhaps, in some ways, than the historical method or the method by standards, the appreciative is likely to be of more immediate value in re-creating the work for your reader, in giving him a real interpretation of it. And this method, like the other two, fights against superficiality. Such a silly saying — silly in criticism — as "I like it but I don't know why" can have no place here. One may well remember the answer attributed to the artist Whistler, when the gushing woman remarked, "I don't know anything about art but I know what I like!" "So, Madam, does a cow!" If you

guard against the morbid or sentimental effusive style, and really tell, honestly and attractively, what you find good in the subject, your criticism is likely to be of value. Note that in the selection which follows, though the author feels strongly toward his subject, he does not fall, at any time, into gushing remarks that make a reader feel sheepish, but rather keeps a really wholesome tone throughout.

To-day I have read *The Tempest*. It is perhaps the play that I love best, and, because I seem to myself to know it so well, I commonly pass it over in opening the book. Yet, as always in regard to Shakespeare, having read it once more, I find that my knowledge was less complete than I supposed. So it would be, live as long as one might; so it would ever be, whilst one had the strength to turn the pages and a mind left to read them.

I like to believe that this was the poet's last work, that he wrote it in his home in Stratford, walking day by day in the fields which had taught his boyhood to love rural England. It is ripe fruit of the supreme imagination, perfect craft of the master hand. For a man whose life business it has been to study the English tongue, what joy can there be to equal that of marking the happy ease wherewith Shakespeare surpasses, in mere command of words, every achievement of these even, who, apart from him, are great? I could fancy that, in *The Tempest*, he wrought with a peculiar consciousness of this power, smiling as the word of inimitable felicity, the phrase of incomparable cadence, was whispered to him by the Ariel that was his genius. He seems to sport with language, to amuse himself with new discovery of its resources. From king to beggar, men of every rank and of every order of mind have spoken with his lips; he has uttered the lore of fairyland; now it pleases him to create a being neither man nor fairy, a something between brute and human nature, and to endow its purposes with words. Those words, how they smack of the warm and spawning earth, of the life of creatures that cannot rise above the soil! We do not think of it enough; we stint our wonder because we fall short in appreciation. A miracle is worked before us, and we scarce give heed; it has become familiar to our minds as any other of nature's marvels, which we rarely pause to reflect upon.

*The Tempest* contains the noblest meditative passage in all the plays; that which embodies Shakespeare's final view of life, and is the inevitable quotation of all who would sum the teachings of philosophy. It contains his most exquisite lyrics, his tenderest love passages, and one glimpse of fairyland which — I cannot but think — outshines the utmost beauty of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Prospero's farewell to the "elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves." Again a miracle; these are things which cannot be staled by repetition. Come to them often as you will, they are ever fresh as though new minted from the brain of the poet. Being perfect, they can never droop under that satiety which arises from the perception of fault; their virtue can never be so entirely savoured as to leave no pungency of gusto for the next approach.

Among the many reasons which make me glad to have been born in England, one of the first is that I read Shakespeare in my mother tongue. If I try to imagine myself as one who cannot know him face to face, who hears him only speaking from afar, and that in accents which only through the laboring intelligence can touch the living soul, there comes upon me a sense of chill discouragement, of dreary deprivation. I am wont to think that I can read Homer, and, assuredly, if any man enjoys him, it is I; but can I for a moment dream that Homer yields me all his music, that his word is to me as to him who walked by the Hellenic shore when Hellas lived? I know that there reaches me across the vast of time no more than a faint and broken echo; I know that it would be fainter still, but for its blending with those memories of youth which are as a glimmer of the world's primeval glory. Let every land have joy of its poet; for the poet is the land itself, all its greatness and its sweetness, all that incommunicable heritage for which men live and die. As I close the book, love and reverence possess me. Whether does my full heart turn to the great Enchanter, or to the Island upon which he has laid his spell? I know not. I cannot think of them apart. In the love and reverence awakened by this voice of voices, Shakespeare and England are but one.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Gissing: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecraft*, "Summer." By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

### Practical Helps

We have said that criticism of literature and art seems to be more difficult than criticism of machines and buildings and commercial systems. It is. Literature and art, as being the expression of the high thought of the human heart about the world, man, and his relations to the world, demand in a critic who attempts to estimate them at least some underlying philosophy of life, at least some insight into the affairs of the human soul. And such philosophy, such insight, does not come without being eagerly sought or without much thinking. I can soon tell whether a force pump is efficient; I may for some time pause before I estimate a picture or a lyric poem. For the field of the pump is small and definite, its relations are simple, whereas the lyric is intimately bound up with the whole of life.

But we need not, therefore, despair of writing criticism of literature and art. The more sensible thing is to simplify our task. This we can do, in large measure, by asking the famous three questions of Coleridge: First, What did the author intend to do? second, How did he accomplish his purpose, well or ill? third, Was the purpose worth striving for? These three questions, sensibly considered and properly answered, will make a by no means paltry criticism.

Still the problem remains, how shall I write this criticism, whatever method I may be pursuing. Certain points of advice may be of use. In the first place, be sure of your attitude, that it is fair and sincere, that it is honest and as unprejudiced as possible. Then do not browbeat your reader into accepting this attitude. Allow him the right to make final decision, and, moreover, credit him with the right to some brains — he will be thus much happier. In the second place, be sure that you know what you are talking about, that you are sure of the *facts*, whether you treat literature or machinery or government or rotation of crops. Without

proper facts you can never reach a sound conclusion. And "keep your eye on the object." In no kind of writing is there a greater tendency to fritter off into related subjects which are still not exactly the one in hand. Be sure that you write about the subject, then, and not about some other. In the next place, since many remarks apply equally well to a host of subjects, as, for instance, that it is "efficient" or "inspiring," aim first of all, before you write a word, to find the one characteristic that your subject possesses that distinguishes it from others. Ask yourself wherein it is itself, wherein it differs from other like things, what it is without which this particular subject would not be itself. And having determined this point, be sure to make your reader see it. Whatever else you do, prize that characteristic as the jewel of your criticism's soul, and so sharply define, limit, characterize that your reader's impression will be not the slightest blurred. A student whose theme in criticism received from the instructor the verdict that it was not distinguishing, that it might apply as well to another poet, replied that the theme had originally been written about another, and in the press of circumstance had been copied with only a change in the title. The point is that the criticism had not been a good estimate of the original subject. It was worthless in both cases, because it was not distinguishing.

Finally, when you come to the expression, be sure that what you say means something, and that you know what it means. Ask yourself, "What does this mean that I have written?" and, if you have to admit that you do not know, in all conscience suppress it. Avoid the stock phrases that are colorless. You can fling "interesting" at almost any book, or its opposite, "stupid," just as you can apply "true to life," "good style," "suggestive," "gripping," "vital," "red-blooded," "imaginative," and hosts of other words and phrases equally well to scores of subjects. The reviewer

through whose mind a constant stream of subjects passes, is forced to fall into this cant unless he be a genius, but you have no business to do so. The trouble here, again, is in not knowing exactly what you wish to say and are saying, lack of thorough knowledge of your subject, for you do not know it until you have reached its heart. The result of half-knowledge is always flabbiness and ineffectiveness. Be careful, moreover, in making the structure of your total criticism, especially in criticism by standards, that you do not make the form of your work seem mechanical and wooden. Do not, for example, except in a report, give a dry list of the qualities which the subject should possess, and then one by one apply them to see if it will pass muster. Such writing may be true, but it is awkward. The form of critical writing should be as neat as that of any other kind of writing.

And in all your attitude and expression try to treat the subject as far as possible in its relation to humanity, to keep it from being a mere abstraction, to make it seem of real significance to the lives of men, if possible to the life of your reader.

The value of writing criticism should by this time be apparent. It forces our minds out of the fogginess of vague thinking, it makes us see things sharply, it guides us away from the taint of superficiality, it makes a solid base for our opinions. Through criticism we discover why we are interested, and then naturally we desire more interest, and by feeding grow to a larger appreciation and conception of the realm in which our minds are at work. We thus do away with the mere chance whim of like and dislike, and understand why we like what we do. In other words, criticism increases our intelligent reaction to life.

## EXERCISES

**I. Mr. Lowell's Work in England** (page 193).

1. By what standards is the work of Lowell as United States Minister to England criticized?
2. Do these standards exhaust the qualifications of an admirable minister?
3. If not, what other standards would you suggest?
4. What is the *controlling purpose* of the criticism?
5. In view of this *controlling purpose*, are the standards which the criticism includes sufficient?
6. Write a similar criticism on any of the following subjects:  
 The presidency of Theodore Roosevelt.  
 The presidency of Woodrow Wilson.  
 The work of Mr. Goethals on the Panama Canal.  
 The career of Mr. Bryce as British Ambassador to the United States.  
 The career of James J. Hill, or of Cecil Rhodes, as Empire-builders.
7. Write a historical criticism of Lowell's career in England, *accounting for* the attitude he assumed as determined by the understanding of America which the English nation of the time had, and by Lowell's character.

**II. The American Business Man** (page 197).

1. Criticize any of the following by accounting for their rise and their characteristics:  
 The athletic coach in American colleges.  
 The present-day university president.  
 The "information" man at the railway station.  
 The county adviser in agriculture.  
 The reference librarian.  
 The floorwalker in department stores.
2. Write an appreciative criticism of the American Business Man as he might seem to an Englishman on his first trip to America; as he might seem to Plato; to Napoleon; to the poet Shelley; to Shakespeare; to a Turkish rug merchant.

**III. The "New Poetry"** (page 200).

1. Is this criticism fair and unbiased?
2. What attitude does the author try to create in the reader? How would the choice of material have differed had the author desired an opposite effect?
3. Criticize, by relating to the times in which the subject appeared, the following: Cubist Art, Sentimentalism, The Renaissance of Wonder, The Dime Novel, The Wild-West Moving Picture Film.

**IV. Cargo Steamers** (page 203).

1. Criticize, by the method used in this example: Gang Plows;

Electric Street Cars, Football Fields, Art Galleries (their architecture), Adding Machines, Systems of Bookkeeping.

V. The English Language (page 205).

1. Criticize, by the method of standards, the following: American Costumes as Candidates for Universal Use, The Metric System, The American Monetary System, The Gary Schools, The Civic Center Idea.

VI. English Cooking (page 210).

1. If Gissing had been criticizing English cooking from the point of view of a dietitian, what standards would he have chosen?
2. Criticize modern American cooking by showing its rise and the influences that have controlled it.
3. Write an appreciative criticism of any of the following subjects: Thanksgiving Dinner in the Country, A "Wienie Roast," The First Good Meal after an Illness, The Old Swimmin' Hole, The Fudge that Went Wrong, American Hat Trimming, The Florist's Shop, Grandmother's Garden, The Old Orchard.

VII. The Tempest (page 213).

1. Does Gissing here allow his natural bias as an Englishman to sway him too much? Do you know as much about *The Tempest*, from this criticism, as you would like to?
2. Criticize, as an American, with yet due restraint: Lincoln's Addresses, Mr. Wilson's Leadership in Idealism, Walt Whitman's "Captain, My Captain," MacDowell's "Indian Suite" or "Sea Pieces" or "Woodland Sketches," St. Gaudens' "Lincoln," O. Henry's Stories of New York, John Burroughs' Nature Essays, Patrick Henry's Speeches, Mrs. Wharton's Short Stories.

VIII. Make a list of trite or often used expressions that you find in criticisms in the weekly "literary" page of an American newspaper. Try to substitute diction that is more truly alive.

IX. When next you hear a symphony, listen so that you can write an Appreciative Criticism. Then look up the history of symphonic music and the life of the composer, and write a Historical Criticism. Do this with any piano composition which you admire.

X. Rock Drills.

Tappet valve drills were the earliest design made for regular work, and are now the only type really suitable for work with steam, as the condensation of the steam interferes with other valve actions. They have also special advantages for certain work which have prevented them from becoming obsolete. The valve motion is positive and not affected by moisture in compressed air. The machine will keep on boring a hole that may offer great frictional resistance where some other drills would stick.

Disadvantages. These drills cannot deliver a perfectly "free" or "dead" blow. In other words, there is always some exhaust air

from the front of the piston, caught between it and the cylinder by the reversal of the valve just before the forward stroke is finished. In some ground this is by no means a defect, for where the ground is dead or sticky this cushion helps to "pick the drill up" for a rapid and sure return stroke, preventing its sticking and insuring a maximum number of blows per minute. The length of stroke must be kept long enough for the movement of the piston to knock over the valve. The valve on the Rio Tinto machine is a piston, or spool valve; on other machines the valve is of the plain D-slide valve type. The Rand "giant" drill has a device to reduce the total air pressure on the back of the valve. This of course makes the valve take up its own wear and form its own bearing surface, thus reducing leakage. The seats generally require periodical cleaning and are raised to give material to allow "scraping up."

Where the lubrication is deficient, as it generally is, the coefficient of friction may reach 25 per cent, especially in the presence of grit. Taking a valve area of 6 sq. in. exposed to 80-lb. pressure, it might require a force of 120 lbs. to move the valve. This means that the blow struck by the piston is retarded to a corresponding degree, and in some cases the valve tends to wear its seat into an irregular surface. Some writers have contended that the turning movement of the piston is also hindered; but as the blow of the tappet occurs at the beginning and end of the stroke, while the turning movement is a positive and continuous one along all the length of the back stroke, this effect is not noticeable. As the tappet is struck 400 to 600 times per minute, the wear and stress is great. Specially hardened surfaces on pistons and tappets are needed as well as large wearing surfaces, or renewable bushings, for the tappet to rock on. When wear takes place the throw of the valve is reduced; cushioning becomes greater and the stroke is shortened. The resistance and pressure of the tappet tends to throw increased and unequal wear on the opposite side of the cylinder.<sup>1</sup>

1. If you were writing an appreciative criticism of the working of a rock drill, how would you change the style of writing?
2. Write a criticism by standards of the Water-Tube Boiler, of the Diesel Engine, of Oil as Fuel for Ships, of one particular make of Corn Planter or Wheel Hoe, or Piano, or Motorcycle, or Machine Gun, or Mining Explosive, or of one method of Advertising, or of the German Army, or of the Dreadnaught as a Fighting Machine.

## XI. Jingo Morality.

Captain Mahan's chosen example is the British occupation of Egypt. To discuss the morality of this, he says, is "as little to the

<sup>1</sup> Eustace M. Weston: *Rock Drills*. By courtesy of the publishers, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

point as the morality of an earthquake." It was for the benefit of the world at large and of the people of Egypt — no matter what the latter might think about it, or how they would have voted about it — and that is enough. Tacitly, he makes the same doctrine apply to the great expansion of the foreign power of the United States, which he foresees and for which he wants a navy "developed in proportion to the reasonable possibilities of the future political." What these possibilities are he nowhere says, and he gives the reader no chance of judging whether they are reasonable or not. But he speaks again and again of the development of the nation and of national sentiment as a "natural force," moving on to its desired end, unconscious and unmoral. What he says of British domination over Egypt, Captain Mahan would evidently and logically be ready to say of American domination of any inferior power — that it has no more to do with morality than an earthquake.

Of course, this really means the glorification of brute force. The earthquake view of international relations does away at once with all questions of law and justice and humanity, and puts everything frankly on the basis of armor and guns. Finerty could ask no more. No one could accuse Captain Mahan of intending this, yet he must "follow the argument." He speaks approvingly of international interference with Turkey on account of the Armenian atrocities. But has not the Sultan a complete defense, according to Captain Mahan's doctrine? Is he not an earthquake, too? Are not the Turks going blindly ahead, in Armenia, as a "natural force," and is anybody likely to be foolish enough to discuss the morality of a law of nature? Of course, the powers tell the Sultan that he is no earthquake at all, or, if he is, that they will bring to bear upon him a bigger one which will shake him into the Bosphorus. But if there is no question of morality involved, the argument and the action are simply so much brute force; and that, we say, is what Captain Mahan's doctrine logically comes to.

Another inadvertent revelation of the real implications of his views is given where he is dwelling on the fact that "the United States will never seek war except for the defense of her rights, her obligations, or her necessary interests." There is a fine ambiguity about the final phrase, but let that pass. No one can suspect that Captain Mahan means to do anything in public or private relations that he does not consider absolutely just. But note the way the necessity of arguing for a big navy clouds his mind when he writes of some supposed international difficulty: "But the moral force of our contention might conceivably be weakened, in the view of an opponent, by attendant circumstances, *in which case our physical power to support it should be open to no doubt.*" That is to say, we must always have morality and sweet reasonableness

on our side, must have all our quarrels just, must have all the precedents and international law in our favor, but must be prepared to lick the other fellow anyhow, if he is so thick-headed and obstinate as to insist that morals and justice are on *his* side.

This earthquake and physical-power doctrine is a most dangerous one for any time or people, but is peculiarly dangerous in this country at this time. The politicians and the mob will be only too thankful to be furnished a high-sounding theory as a justification for their ignorant and brutal proposals for foreign conquest and aggression. They will not be slow, either, in extending and improving the theory. They will take a less roundabout course than Captain Mahan does to the final argument of physical power. If it comes to that in the end, what is the use of bothering about all these preliminaries of right and law? They will be willing to call themselves an earthquake or a cyclone, if only their devastating propensities can be freely gratified without any question of morals coming in. With so many signs of relaxed moral fiber about us, in public and in private life, it is no time to preach the gospel of force, even when the preacher is so attractive a man and writer as Captain Mahan.<sup>1</sup>

1. In the light of this criticism, write an estimate, on the standard of high moral international relations, of Mr. Wilson's policy toward Mexico.
2. Write a criticism by standards of the remark of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. George Creel that they are thankful that England, that America, were *not* prepared for war in 1914.
3. Write an appreciative criticism of Captain Mahan's doctrine from the point of view of a man who thumps his chest and cries "America über Alles!" Compare the sanity of your criticism with that of the article above.
4. Would the criticism of Captain Mahan's doctrine be sounder if he had been a German?
5. Criticize the statement that what young people need is industrial education, something to teach them how to earn a living. Then criticize the other statement that the necessary thing is to make young people into fine personalities, into true gentlemen and gentlewomen.

## XII. Vegetarianism.

There is to me an odd pathos in the literature of vegetarianism. I remember the day when I read these periodicals and pamphlets with all the zest of hunger and poverty, vigorously seeking to persuade myself that flesh was an altogether superfluous, and even

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Pollak: *Fifty Years of American Idealism*. Houghton Mifflin Company. By courtesy of *The Nation*.

repulsive, food. If ever such things fall under my eyes nowadays, I am touched with a half humorous compassion for the people whose necessity, not their will, consents to this chemical view of diet. There comes before me the vision of certain vegetarian restaurants, where, at a minimum outlay, I have often enough made believe to satisfy my craving stomach; where I have swallowed "savory cutlet," "vegetable steak," and I know not what windy insufficiencies tricked up under specious names. One place do I recall where you had a complete dinner for sixpence — I dare not try to remember the items. But well indeed do I see the faces of the guests — poor clerks and shopboys, bloodless girls and women of many sorts — all endeavoring to find a relish in lentil soup and haricot something-or-other. It was a grotesquely heart-breaking sight.

I hate with a bitter hatred the names of lentils and haricots — those pretentious cheats of the appetite, those tabulated humbugs, those certificated aridities calling themselves human food! An ounce of either, we are told, is equivalent to — how many pounds? of the best rump-steak. There are not many ounces of common sense in the brain of him who proves it, or of him who believes it. In some countries, this stuff is eaten by choice; in England only dire need can compel to its consumption. Lentils and haricots are not merely insipid; frequent use of them causes something like nausea. Preach and tabulate as you will, the English palate — which is the supreme judge — rejects this farinaceous makeshift. Even as it rejects vegetables without the natural concomitant of meat; as it rejects oatmeal-porridge and griddle-cakes for a mid-day meal; as it rejects lemonade and ginger-ale offered as substitutes for honest beer.

What is the intellectual and moral state of that man who really believes that chemical analysis can be an equivalent for natural gusto? — I will get more nourishment out of an inch of right Cambridge sausage; aye, out of a couple of ounces of honest tripe; than can be yielded me by half a hundredweight of the best lentils ever grown.<sup>1</sup>

1. Write a criticism by standards of this appreciative criticism. Is Gissing fair or sensible in his attitude?
2. Write an appreciative criticism of Feminism, Temperance, Socialism, Open-Air Sleeping, The Bahai Movement in America, Community Singing, The Moving Picture as Substitute for the Novel, Drinks that Do Away with Coffee, Systems for Growing Strong without Effort.
3. How far ought a writer to allow purely personal reaction to determine his judgment in criticism?

<sup>1</sup> George Gissing: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecraft*, "Winter." By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

**XIII. Emerson's Literary Quality.**

Emerson's quality has changed a good deal in his later writings. His corn is no longer in the milk; it has grown hard, and we that read have grown hard too. He has now ceased to be an expansive, revolutionary force, but he has not ceased to be a writer of extraordinary gripe and unexpected resources of statement. His startling piece of advice, "Hitch your wagon to a star," is typical of the man, as combining the most unlike and widely separate qualities. Because not less marked than his idealism and mysticism is his shrewd common sense, his practical bent, his definiteness,—in fact, the sharp New England mould in which he is cast. He is the master Yankee, the centennial flower of that thrifty and peculiar stock. More especially in his later writings and speakings do we see the native New England traits,—the alertness, eagerness, inquisitiveness, thrift, dryness, archness, caution, the nervous energy as distinguished from the old English unction and vascular force. How he husbands himself,—what prudence, what economy, always spending up, as he says, and not down! How alert, how attentive; what an inquisitor; always ready with some test question, with some fact or idea to match or verify, ever on the lookout for some choice bit of adventure or information, or some anecdote that has pith and point! No tyro basks and takes his ease in his presence, but is instantly put on trial and must answer or be disgraced. He strikes at an idea like a falcon at a bird. His great fear seems to be lest there be some fact or point worth knowing that will escape him. He is a close-browed miser of the scholar's gains. He turns all values into intellectual coin. Every book or person or experience is an investment that will or will not warrant a good return in ideas. He goes to the Radical Club, or to the literary gathering, and listens with the closest attention to every word that is said, in hope that something will be said, some word dropped, that has the ring of the true metal. Apparently he does not permit himself a moment's indifference or inattention. His own pride is always to have the ready change, to speak the exact and proper word, to give to every occasion the dignity of wise speech. You are bartered with for your best. There is no profit in life but in the interchange of ideas, and the chief success is to have a head well filled with them. Hard cash at that; no paper promises satisfy him; he loves the clink and glint of the real coin.

His earlier writings were more flowing and suggestive, and had reference to larger problems; but now everything has got weighed and stamped and converted into the medium of wise and scholarly conversation. It is of great value; these later essays are so many bags of genuine coin, which it has taken a lifetime to hoard; not all gold, but all good, and the fruit of wise industry and economy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Burroughs: *Birds and Poets*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

1. Would you describe this as appreciative criticism or criticism by standards? If it is appreciative, has it any of the value that we commonly attribute to criticism by standards? Why? If it is criticism by standards, does it approach the appreciative? Why?
2. Criticize, in the method that Mr. Burroughs uses, the literary quality and message of Carlyle, Walt Whitman, William James, John Dewey, Macaulay, Hawthorne, Arnold Bennett, and others.
3. Criticize, in the same manner, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the Cathedral of Rheims, the Parthenon, the Capitol at Washington, Michigan Boulevard in Chicago, the Skyline of Lower New York, the Sweep of the Mississippi River, the Quality of Niagara Falls, the Quality of Harold Bell Wright's Works. Of course any other individual can be substituted for any of these.

#### XIV. Military Drill.

A lettered German, speaking to me once of his year of military service, told me that, had it lasted but a month or two longer, he must have sought release in suicide. I know very well that my own courage would not have borne me to the end of the twelve-month; humiliation, resentment, loathing, would have goaded me to madness. At school we used to be "drilled" in the playground once a week; I have but to think of it, even after forty years, and there comes back upon me that tremor of passionate misery which, at the time, often made me ill. The senseless routine of mechanical exercise was in itself all but unendurable to me; I hated the standing in line, the thrusting out of arms and legs at a signal, the thud of feet stamping in constrained unison. The loss of individuality seems to me sheer disgrace. And when, as often happened, the drill-sergeant rebuked me for some inefficiency as I stood in line, when he addressed me as "Number Seven!" I burned with shame and rage. I was no longer a human being; I had become part of a machine, and my name was "Number Seven." It used to astonish me when I had a neighbor who went through the drill with amusement, with zealous energy. I would gaze at the boy, and ask myself how it was possible that he and I should feel so differently. To be sure, nearly all my schoolfellows either enjoyed the thing, or at all events went through it with indifference; they made friends with the sergeant, and some were proud of walking with him "out of bounds." Left, right! Left, right! For my own part, I think I have never hated man as I hated that broad-shouldered, hard-visaged, brassy-voiced fellow. Every word he spoke to me I felt as an insult. Seeing him in the distance, I have turned and fled, to escape the necessity of saluting, and, still more, a quiver of the nerves which affected me so painfully. If ever a

man did me harm, it was he; harm physical and moral. In all seriousness I believe that some of the nervous instability from which I have suffered from boyhood is traceable to those accursed hours of drill, and I am very sure that I can date from the same wretched moments a fierceness of personal pride which has been one of my most troublesome characteristics. The disposition, of course, was there; it should have been modified, not exacerbated.<sup>1</sup>

1. Draw up a list of the headings that might appear in a criticism of military drill by standards, in a criticism by the historical method, and in a less purely personal appreciative criticism than the example here. Which of the criticisms, as judged from these headings, would be of most value to a reader of intelligence?
2. In a subject like this is so strong a personal reaction justified? Is it possibly of real value? Does the criticism prove anything about military drill?
3. Write an appreciative criticism of a thoroughly personal nature of any of the following: Carpentry, Rug-beating, Chapel-attendance, Memorizing Poetry, Repairing Automobiles in the Mud, Fishing in the Rain, Cleaning House, Getting up Early, Being Polite to People Whom You Dislike, Being Made to Do One's Duty, College Politics.

#### XV. National Sentiment.

National sentiment is a fact and should be taken account of by institutions. When it is ignored, it is intensified and becomes a source of strife. It can be rendered harmless only by being given free play so long as it is not predatory. But it is not, in itself, a good or admirable feeling. There is nothing rational and nothing desirable in a limitation of sympathy which confines it to a fragment of the human race. Diversities of manners and customs and traditions are on the whole a good thing, since they enable different nations to produce different types of excellence. But in national feeling there is always latent or explicit an element of hostility to foreigners. National feeling, as we know it, could not exist in a nation which was wholly free of external pressure of a hostile kind.

And group feeling produces a limited and often harmful kind of morality. Men come to identify the good with what serves the interest of their own group, and the bad with what works against those interests, even if it should happen to be in the interest of mankind as a whole. This group morality is very much in evidence during war, and is taken for granted in men's ordinary thought. Although almost all Englishmen consider the defeat of

<sup>1</sup> George Gissing: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, "Spring." By permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

Germany desirable for the good of the world, yet most of them honor a German fighting for his country, because it has not occurred to them that his action ought to be guided by a morality higher than that of the group. A man does right, as a rule, to have his thoughts more occupied with the interests of his own nation than with those of others, because his actions are more likely to affect his own nation. But in time of war, and in all matters which are of equal concern to other nations and to his own, a man ought to take account of the universal welfare, and not allow his survey to be limited by the interest, or supposed interest, of his own group or nation.<sup>1</sup>

1. Write a criticism of any of the following, judging by the results produced: School Spirit, Capitalism, Living in a Small Town, National Costume, Giving up One's Patriotism, Family Loyalty, Race Loyalty, Class Distinction, Restriction of Reading to the authors of One Nation.
2. Would Mr. Russell's criticism be of more value if it showed more emotion, if it were less detached? Can a writer profitably criticize such a reality as *national sentiment* without introducing emotion?

XVI. A constitutional statesman is in general a man of common opinions and uncommon abilities. The reason is obvious. When we speak of a free government, we mean a government in which the sovereign power is divided, in which a single decision is not absolute, where argument has an office. The essence of the *gouvernement des avocats*, as the Emperor Nicholas called it, is, that you must persuade so many persons. The appeal is not to the solitary decision of a single statesman, — not to Richelieu or Nesselrode alone in his closet, — but to the jangled mass of men, with a thousand pursuits, a thousand interests, a thousand various habits. Public opinion, as it is said, rules; and public opinion is the opinion of the average man. Fox used to say of Burke, "Burke is a wise man, but he is wise too soon." The average man will not bear this: he is a cool, common person, with a considerate air, with figures in his mind, with his own business to attend to, with a set of ordinary opinions arising from and suited to ordinary life. He can't bear novelty or originalities; he says, "Sir, I never heard of such a thing *before* in my life," and he thinks this a *reductio ad absurdum*. You may see his taste by the reading of which he approves. Is there a more splendid monument of talent and industry than the *Times*? No wonder that the average man — that any one — believes in it. As Carlyle observes: "Let the highest

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand Russell: *National Independence and Internationalism*. By courtesy of The Atlantic Monthly Company.

intellect, able to write epics, try to write such a leader for the morning newspapers: it cannot do it; the highest intellect will fail." But did you ever see anything there that you had never seen before? Out of the million articles that every one has read, can any one person trace a single marked idea to a single article? Where are the deep theories and the wise axioms and the everlasting sentiments which the writers of the most influential publication in the world have been the first to communicate to an ignorant species? Such writers are far too shrewd. The two million or whatever number of copies it may be they publish, are not purchased because the buyers wish to know the truth. The purchaser desires an article which he can appreciate at sight; which he can lay down and say, "An excellent article, very excellent — exactly my own sentiments." Original theories give trouble; besides, a grave man on the Coal Exchange does not desire to be an apostle of novelties among the contemporaneous dealers in fuel, — he wants to be provided with remarks he can make on the topics of the day which will not be known *not* to be his, that are not too profound, which he can fancy the paper only reminded him of. And just in the same way, precisely as the most popular political paper is not that which is abstractly the best or most instructive, but that which most exactly takes up the minds of men where it finds them, catches the fleeting sentiment of society, puts it in such a form as society can fancy would convince another society which did not believe; so the most influential of constitutional statesmen is the one who most felicitously expresses the creed of the moment, who administers it, who embodies it in laws and institutions, who gives it the highest life it is capable of, who induces the average man to think, "I could not have done it any better if I had had time myself."

It might be said that this is only one of the results of that tyranny of commonplace which seems to accompany civilization. You may talk of the tyranny of Nero and Tiberius; but the real tyranny is the tyranny of your next-door neighbor. What law is so cruel as the law of doing what he does? What yoke is so galling as the necessity of being like him? What espionage of despotism comes to your door so effectually as the eye of the man who lives at your door? Public opinion is a permeating influence, and it exacts obedience to itself; it requires us to think other men's thoughts, to speak other men's words, to follow other men's habits. Of course, if we do not, no formal ban issues; no corporeal pain, no coarse penalty of a barbarous society is inflicted on the offender: but we are called "eccentric"; there is a gentle murmur of "most unfortunate ideas," "singular young man," "well-intentioned, I dare say; but unsafe, sir, quite unsafe." The prudent of course conform: The place of nearly everybody depends on the opinion of every one else. There is nothing like Swift's precept to

attain the repute of a sensible man, "Be of the opinion of the person with whom at the time you are conversing." This world is given to those whom this world can trust. Our very conversation is infected: where are now the bold humor, the explicit statement, the grasping dogmatism of former days? they have departed, and you read in the orthodox works dreary regrets that the *art* of conversation has passed away. It would be as reasonable to expect the art of walking to pass away: people talk well enough when they know to whom they are speaking; we might even say that the art of conversation was improved by an application to new circumstances. "Secrete your intellect, use common words, say what you are expected to say," and you shall be at peace; the secret of prosperity in common life is to be commonplace on principle.

Whatever truth there may be in these splenetic observations might be expected to show itself more particularly in the world of politics: people dread to be thought unsafe in proportion as they get their living by being thought to be safe. "Literary men," it has been said, "are outcasts"; and they are eminent in a certain way notwithstanding. "They can say strong things of their age; for no one expects they will go out and act on them." They are a kind of ticket-of-leave lunatics, from whom no harm is for the moment expected; who seem quiet, but on whose vagaries a practical public must have its eye. For statesmen it is different: they must be thought men of judgment. The most morbidly agricultural counties were aggrieved when Mr. Disraeli was made Chancellor of the Exchequer: they could not believe he was a man of solidity, and they could not comprehend taxes by the author of "*Coningsby*" or sums by an adherent of the Caucasus. "There is," said Sir Walter Scott, "a certain hypocrisy of action, which, however it is despised by persons intrinsically excellent, will nevertheless be cultivated by those who desire the good repute of men." Politicians, as has been said, live in the repute of the commonality. They may appeal to posterity; but of what use is posterity? Years before that tribunal comes into life, your life will be extinct; it is like a moth going into chancery. Those who desire a public career must look to the views of the living public; an immediate exterior influence is essential to the exertion of their faculties. The confidence of others is your *fulcrum*: you cannot — many people wish you could — go into Parliament to represent yourself; you must conform to the opinions of the electors, and they, depend on it, will not be original. In a word, as has been most wisely observed, "under free institutions it is necessary occasionally to defer to the opinions of other people; and as other people are obviously in the wrong, this is a great hindrance to the improvement of our political system and the progress of our species."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Walter Bagehot: "The Character of Sir Robert Peel," *Works*, vol. iii. Travelers Insurance Company, Hartford, Conn.

1. Apply Bagehot's criticism of the effects of a democratic average to the fate of Socrates, Jesus, Columbus, Galileo, Roger Williams, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln. Do your results justify Bagehot's statements?
2. If Bagehot's theory is true, how do you account for any advance in a democracy, for woman suffrage, for example, or the election of senators by popular vote, or the inaugurating of an income tax?
3. Apply his remarks about literary men to the career of Thomas Carlyle, Heine, Galsworthy, and others who have criticized their times.
4. Does the Christian religion tend to make a man act on his own original ideas?

XVII. Do you believe the following statement by a well-known musical critic? If the statement is true, how far is it possible to extend it, to how many forms of art or business?

While the lover of music may often be in doubt as to the merit of a composition, he need never be so in regard to that of a performance. Here we stand on safe and sure ground, for the qualities that make excellence in performance are all well known, and it is necessary only that the ear shall be able to detect them. There may, of course, be some difference of opinion about the reading of a sonata or the interpretation of a symphony; but even these differences should be rare. Differences of judgment about the technical qualities of a musical performance should never exist. Whether a person plays the piano or sings well or ill is not a question of opinion, but of fact. The critic who is acquainted with the technics of the art can pronounce judgment upon a performance with absolute certainty, and there is no reason in the world why every lover of music should not do the same thing. There should not be any room for such talk as this: "I think Mrs. Blank sang very well, did n't you?" "Well, I did n't like it much."

And there should be no room for the indiscriminate applause of bad performances which so often grieve the hearts of judicious listeners. Bad orchestral playing, bad piano playing, bad singing are applauded every day in the course of the musical season by people who think they have a right to an opinion. I repeat that it is not a matter of opinion but a matter of fact; and a person might just as well express the belief that a short fat man was finely proportioned as to say that an ill-balanced orchestra was a good one, and he might as well say that in his opinion a fire-engine whistle was music as to say that a throaty voice-production was good singing.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Henderson: *What is Good Music?* By courtesy of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City. Copyright, 1898.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE INFORMAL ESSAY

IT is a fine thing to be serious, to draw one's self up to a formal task of explaining a machine or analyzing an idea or criticizing a novel; and it is just as fine, and often more pleasurable, to banish the grim seriousness of business and take on pliancy, smile at Life — even though there be tears — and chuckle at Care. Life is more than mere toil; there are the days of high feast and carnival, the days of excursion, and then the calm quiet days of peaceful meditation, sometimes even the days of gray sadness shot through with the crimson thread of sacrifice and sorrow. Often in the least noisy days we see most clearly, with most balance, and with the keenest humor, the finest courage. Like an athlete who cannot be forever in the life of stern rigor but must stray at times into the ways of the drawing-room and the library, so we at times take our ways into the realm of whim and sparkle and laughter, of brooding contemplation, of warm peace of soul. "I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters," says Hazlitt, and, "Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner — and then to thinking!" In such moods we look for a good friend to talk with, and when the friend is not at hand — why, we may write informal essays to make record of our thoughts and feelings. For the Informal Essay is the transcript of a personal reaction to some phase or fact of life, personal because the author does not regard life with the cold eye of the scientific thinker, and because he does not, on the other hand, insist, as does the reformer, that others than himself accept the views he sets forth. He will

not force his belief upon others, will not even hold it too feverishly himself, but, if we cannot accept, will even smile urbanely — though he may think we are quite wrong — and bow, and go his own way.

The greatest charm of the informal essay is its personal nature. There is little, if indeed anything, personal about the analysis of problems or situations, slight revelation of the author in a treatise on dietetics or party politics or bridge building. This kind of writing is essentially the writing of our business. "But what need of ceremony among friends?" Lamb asks, and hits the heart of the informal essay. We are with friends, and with them, if the mood is on us, we chat about the delights of munching apples on snappy October mornings, or the humor of the scramble for public office, or the romance of spanning a stream in the hills, or, at times, the mysteries of life and death. And then the chat is thoroughly personal, we feel no grim duty, but only the quiet pleasure of uttering whatever we may think or feel, about things in which we find our personal interests aroused. It is as the counterpart in literature of such talk in living that the informal essay reveals the personal note, is really the lyric of prose. For the informal essay does not affirm, "This must be done!" or, "I will defend this with my life!" or, "This is undeniable truth!" Rather it says, "This is how I feel about things to-day," and if the essayist be aware that he has not always felt thus, that he may even feel differently again, he is unabashed. He will make you his confidant, will tell you what he thinks and how he feels, will banish the cold front of business, and will not be secretive and niggardly of himself, but only duly reticent.

As soon as we turn to informal essays we find this personal note. Here is Cowley's essay "Of Myself," frankly telling of his life. Our eye falls upon Hazlitt's words, "I never was in a better place or humor than I am at present for writing on this subject. I have a partridge getting ready for my sup-

per, my fire is blazing on the hearth, the air is mild for the season of the year, I have had but a slight fit of indigestion to-day (the only thing that makes me abhor myself), I have three hours good before me, and therefore I will attempt it." Such intima.<sup>c.</sup> such personal contact is to be found only in the informal ~~way~~. Only in a form of writing that we frankly acknowledge as familiar would Samuel Johnson write "The Scholar's Complaint of His Own Bashfulness." And once in the writing, the author cannot keep himself out. Steele, not Addison, wrote the words, "He is said to be the first that made Love by squeezing the Hand" — honest, jovial, garrulous Dick Steele, thinking, perhaps, of his "Darling Prue."

If, then, you have some random ideas that interest you, if the memory of your kite-flying days comes strong upon you, or of your early ambitions to be a sailor or a prima donna, if you can see the humor of rushing for trains or eluding taxes, or reciting without study, if you feel keenly the joy of climbing mountains, or canoeing, or gardening, or fussing with engines, or making things with hammer and nails or flour and sugar, if you see the beauty in powerful machinery or in the deep woods and streams and flowers, or the patient heroism — modest heroism — of the men in "Information" booths at railway stations, if you find pathos in the world, or humor, or any personal significance, and are able to understand without being oppressed with seriousness or poignant reality, even of humor, — if you remember or see or feel such things, and wish to talk quite openly about them as they appeal to you, write an informal essay.

Now you can write a personal essay that will be enjoyable only if your personality is attractive. And you cannot draw a reader to you unless you have a keen reaction to the facts of life. Writing informal essays is impossible for the man whose life is neutral, who goes unseeing, unhearing through the world; it is most natural to the man who touches life at

many points and touches with pleasure. Those magic initials, R. L. S., which the world, especially the young world, loves, mean to us a personality that reveled in playing with lead soldiers, in hacking a way through the tropical forests of Samoa, in pursuing streams to their sources, in cleaning "crystal," in talking with all living men, in reading all living books, in whiling the hours with his flageolet. "I have," says Lamb, "an almost feminine partiality for old china." We think, perhaps, of Bacon as a cold austere figure, until we know him, but is he cold when, writing of wild thyme and water mints he says, "Therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread" of sniffing their sweet fragrance? And is a man uninterested who writes, "I grant there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey; and that is what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night"? When we consider the loves of that bright flower of English young manhood, Rupert Brooke, we can the more keenly feel the loss that the essay, as well as poetry, had in his untimely death.

These have I loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,  
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faëry dust;  
Wet roofs, beneath the lamplight; the strong crust  
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;  
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;  
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;  
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,  
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;  
Then, the cool kindness of sheets, that soon  
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss  
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is  
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen  
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;  
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;  
The good smell of old clothes; and other such —

The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,  
 Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers  
 About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .

Dear names,

And thousand other throng to me! Royal flames;  
 Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;  
 Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing;  
 Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,  
 Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;  
 Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam  
 That browns and dwindle as the wave goes home;  
 And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold  
 Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mould;  
 Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;  
 And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;  
 And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass;—  
 All these have been my loves.<sup>1</sup>

Lamb's young Bo-bo was in the right of it, the right frame of mind, when he cried, "O, father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats!" The true writer of informal essays can see that Card Catalogues are humorous, that The Feel of Leather Covered Books is sufficiently interesting to deserve treatment, that Shaving, and Going to Bed Last, and Wondering if the Other Man Knows More, and Manners, and Politeness, and The Effect of Office-holding upon Personality, and Intellectual Deviltry, and The Humility of Sinners, and The Arrogance of Saints, and The Joys of Calling Names, and City Chimney-pots, and The "Woman's Page," and Keeping Up, and The Pleasures of Having a Besetting Sin, and The Absurdities of Education, and When Shakespeare Nods, and thousands of other subjects are all waiting to have their essays. Can there be any possible interest in a carpet layer? Mr. Dallas Lore Sharp, as we have seen,<sup>2</sup> finds it quite wonderful. Is he not to be

<sup>1</sup> Rupert Brooke: *Collected Poems*. By courtesy of the publishers, John Lane Company.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter v.

envied that his reaction was too keen to leave the tool lifeless? An informal essayist would even, we think, find taste in the white of an egg. And without this delight in life his essays will not be read, for they will not present a pleasing personality, and the life of the essay is its personal note.

A personality that is quite alive and thoroughly interested in all sorts of things almost necessarily sees the concrete. Most informal essays are full of individual instances, of anecdotes and scraps from life. The author of "The Privileges of Age" in the *Atlantic Monthly* does not vaguely talk about age in general. She begins, "I have always longed for the privileges of age — since the days when it seemed to me that the elderly people ate all the hearts out of the watermelons," and she continues with the misfortunes of being young, "In coaching, our place was always between the two fattest! O Isabella is thin! She can sit there!" In sheer delight at the memory Hazlitt writes, "It was on the tenth of April, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the *New Eloise*, at the inn of Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken." So Addison, when he will tell us of Sir Roger de Coverley, confides to us his habit of standing up in church service, even in prayer time, to look round him and see if all his tenants are there, or shows him calling out lustily to John Matthews, "to mind what he was about and not disturb the congregation" when John was kicking his heels for diversion. Concrete again, is Sir Roger's remark at the theater, "And let me tell you . . . though he speaks but little, I like the old Fellow in Whiskers as well as any of them." All such detailed bits of life the essayist relishes, and in turn they enrich his personality and make him able to give the personal note that is the heart of the informal essay.

This mood of human interest is illustrated, of course, by other writers than the informal essayists. The historian Parkman filled his volumes with the intimate details of personal experience that keep them warm and forever alive.

As distinct from the dry-as-dust chroniclers, who eschew all of the throbbing incidents of life, he was eager to include whenever inclusion would help the reader's true imagination, such details as that, back in colonial times, the thunderous praying of a member of the General Court of Massachusetts, who had retired to his room for Heavenly counsel, revealed the secret of the proposed attack upon the fortress of Louisbourg to a landlady — and hence to all the world. Nor does he fail to mention that when the Grand Battery at Louisbourg was captured, William Tufts, of Medford, a lad of eighteen, climbed the flagstaff with his red coat in his teeth and made it fast to the pole for a flag. As we read Parkman's words, we can feel his heart glow with the joy of the climbing lad, we know that in the historian there was beating the throb of human love such as would have made him an admirable essayist had he turned his hand to the form.

If, then, you feel like confidential writing, what may your subjects be? Essayists have written about three main classes of subjects: first always, people, their glory, their pathos, their sadness, and their whims; second, nature as it appeals to the writers in a personal way, reflecting their joys and sorrows, or contributing to their sense of pleasure, beauty, and companionship in the world; and third, matters of science, industry, art, literature, as the essayists think these affect the emotions of humanity. If you are in wonderment and desire to speak of the bravery of men fighting the battle of life, you may write with Stevenson the somber but inspiring "Pulvis et Umbra." If you are tempted to smile at the tendency of people to announce beliefs militantly, you may write with Mr. Crothers "On Being a Doctrinaire." If man's ceaseless quest of the perfect appeals, you may write with Mr. Sharp "The Dustless Duster." The interesting old custom of having an awesome "spare chamber," the hurly-burly and humor of moving, the fascinating process of shaving that Grandfather performs on

Sunday, the ways in which some people make themselves lovable, others hateful, others pitiful, and still others ridiculous — these are your rightful field if you but care to use them. The informal essayist loves humanity not blindly but wisely. "There is something about a boy that I like," Charles Dudley Warner wrote, and thereby proved himself worthy to write such essays. Lamb, thinking of chimney-sweeps, cries out, "I have a kindly yearning toward these dim specks — poor blots — innocent blacknesses." Nor is the essayist restricted to the lives of others; the true informal essayist never forgets his own boyhood. The swimming and fishing larks, the tramp for the early chestnuts, the machines that you built at ten years, the tricks you played on friends and enemies, human and four-footed — these await your essay. Especially your grown-up self offers a fertile meadowland of essays. What are your hobbies — and have you any follies? If you can but poke fun at yourself, we will listen. Finally, if you have an interesting acquaintance, a rosy corner grocer, or a maiden aunt of the old school, or a benignant grandfather, or a quaint laundress, or "hired man," or anybody who is worth the words — and who is not? — and who really interests you, you may make a character sketch. Thus Stevenson in "A Scotch Gardener," Leigh Hunt in "The Old Lady," "The Old Gentleman," "The Maidservant," and John Brown in "Jeems the Doorkeeper." Remember only one thing — you must, for some reason, see attractiveness in the character, even the paradoxical attractiveness of repulsion. Remember that Hazlitt wrote an essay on "The Pleasures of Hating."

When people do not offer subjects, turn to nature, as Mr. Burroughs and Mr. Sharp and John Muir have turned in our day, and as others have turned at times ever since there was an essay. Do you admire the cool deep woods, the songs of the thrushes, the clouds that roll into queer shapes, the endlessly talking brooks, the bugs that strive and fight and

achieve, the queer hunted live things that you see everywhere? There is your essay. Mr. Warner wrote a delightful series about gardening in which he makes fun — partly of himself, partly of nature. Richard Jefferies found a subject in "July Grass." Mr. Belloc gives the spirit of the primeval currents of air that bore the ships of our forefathers in his essay, "On a Great Wind." California sequoias, red-eyed vireos, the pig in his pen, the silly hens in their yard, friendly dogs, a group of willows, a view from a mountain-top, trees that rush past as you skim the road in your car, there's hardly a phase of nature that does not offer an essay, have you but the eyes to see and the heart to warm. One caution must be given. This kind of essay will try to lure you into words that seem poetic but really lie; beware that you tell the truth, for a sunset, glorious though it is, is still a sunset. For the higher imaginative flights we reserve our verse. On the other hand, scientific analysis is not for the essay; it is too impersonal. Nature, as seen in the informal essay, is the nature of emotion that keeps its balance through humor and sanity. Do not, then, write an essay about nature unless you are sure of your balance, unless you are sure that you can tell the truth.

But the essayist does not stop with the creations in nature; he goes on to the works of man. He sees the exquisite beauty of a deftly guided mathematical problem, the answer marshaled to its post in order, he feels the exultation of a majestic pumping station, he knows the wonder of the inspiration of artists. As you pass the steel skeleton of the skyscraper, or see the liner gliding up the harbor, or thrill to the locomotive that paws off across the miles, or stand in awe and watch the uncanny linotype machine at its weird mysteries, you may find your subject all ready for the expression. Mr. Joseph Husband finds the romance of these.<sup>1</sup> Books, too, chats with your favorite authors, trips through

<sup>1</sup> *America at Work.*

art galleries, listening to concerts, finding the wonders of the surgeon, — all these, as they appeal to you, as you react to them, as they disclose a meaning, are fit subjects for your essay. Thus Mr. Crothers writes in "The Hundred Worst Books."

Men, nature, things, all are at your beck if you but keenly feel their appeal, if you have an honest thought about them. As you treat them do not hesitate to use the word "I"; in the essay we expect the word, we look for it, we miss it when it eludes us, for the great charm of the informal essay is its personal note, its revelation of the heart of the writer.

Since the essay is urbanely personal, it does not take itself too seriously. Our definition declared that the essayist will not try to force his views upon his reader nor hold them too feverishly himself. If you are militant about a subject, you should write, not an informal essay, but a treatise or an argument in which full play will be given to your cudgels. If you violently believe in woman-suffrage — as you well may — so that you can be only dead-serious about it, do not write an informal essay. For the essay aims at the spirit as well as the intellect, hopes to create a glow in the reader as well as to convince him of a truth. You should write an informal essay when you are in the mood of Sir Roger de Coverley as he remarked, "There is much to be said on both sides." This does not mean that you should write spinelessly — not in the least; it means only that you should be an artist rather than a blind reformer. Sometimes the mind wishes to go upon excursion, to give play to the "wanton heed and giddy cunning" that are in the heart. The essay, says Richard Middleton, "should have the apparent aimlessness of life, and, like life, its secret purpose." It may be mere "exuberant capering round a discovered truth," to borrow Mr. Chesterton's phrase. Again, it may feel the length of the shadows, the cold breath of the mists of the still, unpierced places. The essay does not deny the shadows; it rather be-

lieves in riding up to the guns with a smile and the gesture of courtesy. It sees the truth always, but it also prefers not to be a pest in declaring the truth disagreeably. "Therefore we choose to dally with visions." Many an informal essay has been written on "Death," but not in the mood of the theologian. The essay has about it the exquisite flavor of personality such as we find in the cavalier lads who rode to feasting or to death with equal grace and charm. The real essay ought not to leave its reader uncomfortable; it leaves to the militant writers to work such mischief.

Do not, therefore, ever allow your essay to become a sermon, for to the sermon there is only one side. And do not try to wrench a moral from everything. If you do, the moral will be anaemic and thin. Do not, after watching brooks, be seized with a desire to have your reader "content as they are." Nor, after the locomotive has melted into the distance shall you buttonhole your reader and bid him, like the engine, be up and doing! Better is it to play pranks with respectability and logic. Stevenson's ability to write charming essays came partly from the fact that, as Barrie has said of him, "He was the spirit of boyhood tugging at the skirts of this old world of ours and compelling it to come back and play." Mr. Chesterton often inspires us to do some really new thinking by his ridiculous contentions. Where but in the essay could a man uphold the belief that Faith is Nonsense and perhaps Nonsense is Faith?

In fact, humor is always present in the informal essay. It may be grave or even sad, it is never really boisterous, it is best subtle and quiet, but of whatever kind it should be present. Meredith said "humor is the ability to detect ridicule of those we love without loving them the less." Note, in the light of these words, John Brown's description of his friend Jeems: "Jeems's face was so extensive, and met you so formidably and at once, that it mainly composed his whole; and such a face! Sydney Smith used to say of a certain

quarrelsome man, ‘His very face is a breach of the peace.’ Had he seen our friend’s he would have said that he was the imperative mood on two (very small) legs, out on business in a blue greatcoat.” Lamb had the gentle humor in exquisite degree, kindly and shrewd. When the little chimney-sweep laughed at him for falling in the street Lamb thought, “there he stood . . . with such a maximum of glee and minimum of mischief, in his mirth — for the grin of a genuine sweep hath absolutely no malice in it — that I could have been content, if the honor of a gentleman might endure it, to have remained his butt and mockery till midnight.” The humor is often ironic, frequently dry and lurking, but kindly still, for the essayist loves his fellow man.

Since the essay is not super-serious, it need not be too conscientiously thorough and exhaustive. It must, to be sure, have some point, some core of thought, must meditate, but it need not reach a final conclusion. It often believes, with Stevenson, that “to travel hopefully is better than to arrive,” and it spends its time on the pleasant way. It takes conclusions about as seriously as we take them when we sit with pipe and slippers by the fireside and chat. Its view of the subject is limited also. It is not a piece of research, it need not cover the whole ground with all the minutiae. The essayist, first of all, will admit that he does not say all that might be said. Very likely he will declare that he is merely making suggestions rather than giving a treatment. Think how endless a real treatise on old china would be, and then how brief and sketchy Lamb’s essay is. The beauty of writing an informal essay is that you can stop when you please, you do not feel the dread command of the subject.

Just as the conclusion may be dodged, so the strict laws of rhetoric may be winked at. De Quincey remarks, “Here I pause for a moment to exhort the reader . . . etc.,” and for a whole page talks about a different subject! But we do not

mind, for, as has been said of him — and the remark is equally true of many essayists — he is like a good sheep dog, he makes many detours, may even disappear behind a knoll, but finally he will come eagerly and bravely back with his flock and guide the sheep home. Digressions are allowable, so long as safe return is made. The formlessness of the essay is to be held by an invisible web that is none the less binding, like the bonds of the Fenris wolf. We may go round the subject or stand off and gaze at it, may introduce anecdotes, bits of conversation, illustrations of various sorts, may even cast the essay largely in narrative form, so long as at the heart of it there is our idea. "You may tack and drift, only so you tack and drift round the buoy." Hazlitt, in "On Persons One Would Wish to Have Seen," uses much conversation. Thackeray, in "Tunbridge Toys," clings to the narrative medium.

Mr. Richard Burton, in the foreword to his *Little Essays in Literature and Life*, sums up the informal essay thus:

The way of the familiar essay is one, of the formal essay another. The latter is informational, it defines, proves; the former, seeking for friendlier and more personal relations with the reader, aims at suggestion, stimulation. The familiar essay can be an impressionistic reflection of the author's experience in the mighty issues of living, or it may be the frank expression of a mere whim. It should touch many a deep thing in a way to quicken the sense of the charm, wonder, and terror of the earth. The essayist can fly high, if he but have wings, and he can dive deeper than any plummet line of the intellect, should it happen that the spirit move him.

It is thus the ambition of the familiar essayist to speak wisdom albeit debonairly, to be thought-provoking without heaviness, and helpful without didacticism. Keenly does he feel the lachrymæ rerum, but, sensible to the laughing incongruities of human expression, he has a safeguard against the merely solemn and can smile at himself or others, preserving his sense of humor as a precious gift of the high gods. And most of all, he loves his fellow men, and

would come into fellowship with them through thought that is made mellow by feeling. . . .<sup>1</sup>

And so we return to our definition: the essay is the transcript of personal reaction to some phase or fact of life, not weighted with an over-solemn feeling of responsibility, charged with never-failing balance and humor and liberty to wander without necessarily arriving, frankly individual in its treatment of life, life as it seems to the writer, whether the essay be about people or things or nature.

Of the length of the essay we may not be too definite. It may be only a page in duration; it may cover fifty. When the writer has said what he wishes to say, he blithely ceases, and leaves the work to the reader. In style all the graces, all the lightness, the daintiness, the neatness that he can command the author uses. He loves words for their sound, their suggestiveness, their color. And since he is frequently expressing a mood, he will, so far as he can, adapt the style to the mood. So Lamb, in the exquisite reverie, "Dream Children," casts his vision into the dreamy cadence that lures us into his very mood. So, finally, Mr. Belloc, describing the wind, says:

When a great wind comes roaring over the eastern flats toward the North Sea, driving over the Fens and the Wingland, it is like something of this island that must go out and wrestle with the water, or play with it in a game or battle; and when, upon the western shores, the clouds come bowling up from the horizon, messengers, outriders, or comrades of the gale, it is something of the sea determined to possess the land. The rising and falling of such power, its hesitations, its renewed violence, its fatigue and final repose — all these are symbols of a mind; but more than all the rest, its exultation! It is the shouting and hurrahs of the wind that suits a man.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Richard Burton: *Little Essays in Literature and Life*. By courtesy of the publishers, The Century Company, New York City.

<sup>2</sup> Hilaire Belloc; "On a Great Wind." From *First and Last*. By courtesy of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

THE PRIVILEGES OF AGE<sup>1</sup>

I have always longed for the privileges of age, — since the days when it seemed to me that the elderly people ate all the hearts out of the watermelons. Now it suddenly occurs to me that I am at last entitled to claim them. Surely the shadow on the dial has moved around it, the good time has come, and the accumulated interest of my years shall be mine to spend. Have you not had the same experience? For many years, as you may have noticed, the majority of the inhabitants of the earth were old. Even those persons over whom we were nominally supposed to exercise a little brief authority were older than we, and we approached the dragons of our kitchen with a deprecating eye. But now the majority has moved behind us; most people, even some really quite distinguished people, are younger than we. No longer can we pretend that our lack of distinction is due to immaturity. No longer can we privately assure ourselves that some day we, too, shall do something, and that it is only the becoming modesty of youth which prevents our doing it at once.

One thing, willy-nilly, we have done, — or rather nature has done it for us. She is like von Moltke. "Without haste, without rest," is her motto, and knowing our tendency to dally, she quietly takes matters into her own hands. Suddenly, unconscious of the effort, we awake one morning and find ourselves old. If we can only succeed in being old enough, we shall also be famous, like old Parr, who never did anything, so far as I am aware, but live to the age of one hundred and forty-five.

In order properly to appreciate our present privileges, let us consider the days of old and the years that are past. It was in the time before motors, and we rode backwards in the carriage. We did not like to ride backwards. In traveling, we were always allotted the upper berths. There was no question about it. We could n't expect our venerable aunt, or our delicate cousin, or our dignified grandmother to swing up into an upper berth, could we? And in those days they cost just as much as lower ones and we paid our own traveling expenses. How expert we grew at swinging up and swinging down! Naturally the best rooms at the hotels went to

<sup>1</sup> From The Contributors' Club. By courtesy of The Atlantic Monthly Company.

the elder members of the party. In coaching, our place was always between the two fattest! "O Isabella is thin! she can sit there!"

And what did we ask in return for these many unnoticed renunciations? Only the privilege of getting up at five to go trout-fishing, or the delight of riding all morning cross-saddle to eat a crumby luncheon in a buggy forest at noon. We wondered what the others meant when they said that the beds were not comfortable, and we marveled why the whole machinery of heaven and earth should be out of gear unless, at certain occult and punctually recurring hours, they had a cup of tea. And why was it necessary to make us unhappy if they did n't have a cup of tea?

Young people are supposed to be mannerly, at least they were in my day, but old people may be as rude as they please, and no one reproves them. If they do not like a thing, they promptly announce the fact. The privilege of self-expression they share with the very young. Which reminds me, I detest puddings. Henceforth I shall decline to eat them, even in the house of my friends. Mine is the prerogative no longer to dissemble, for hypocrisy is abhorrent to the members of the favored class to which I now belong. They are like a dear and honored servitor of mine who used, on occasion, to go about her duties with the countenance of a thunderstorm. "Elizabeth," said I, once, reprovingly, "you should not look so cross." "But Miss Isabella," she remarked with reason, "if you don't *look* cross when you *are* cross, how is any one to know you are cross?"

Speaking of thunderstorms, I am afraid of them. I have always been afraid since the days when I used to hide under the nursery table when I felt one coming. But was I allowed to stay under the table? Certainly not. All these years have I maintained a righteous and excruciating self-control. But old ladies are afraid and unashamed. I have heard of one who used to get into the middle of a featherbed. I shall not insist on the featherbed, but I shall close the shutters and turn on the lights and be as cowardly as I please.

The two ends of life, infancy and age, are indulged in their little fancies. For a baby, we get up in the night to heat bottles, and there are certain elderly clergymen whose womenkind always arise at four in the morning to make coffee for them. That is not being

addicted to stimulants. But the middle span of life is like a cantilever bridge: if it can bear its own weight it is expected to bear anything that can possibly be put upon it. "Old age deferred" has no attractions for me. I decline to be middle-aged. I much prefer to be old.

Youth is haunted by misgivings, by hesitations, by a persistent idea that, if only we dislike a thing enough, there must be some merit in our disliking it. Not so untrammled age. From now on, I practice the philosophy of Montesquieu and pursue the general good by doing that which I like best. Absolutely and unequivocally, that which I like best. For there is no longer any doubt about it: I have arrived. I do not have to announce the fact. Others realize it. My friends' daughters give me the most comfortable chair. They surround me with charming, thoughtful, delicate little attentions. Mine is the best seat in the motor, mine the host's arm at the feast, mine the casting vote in any little discussion.

O rare Old Age! How hast thou been maligned! O blessed land of privilege! True paradise for the disciples of Nietzsche, where at last we dare appear as selfish as we are!

#### A BREATH OF APRIL<sup>1</sup>

These still, hazy, brooding mid-April mornings, when the farmer first starts afield with his plow, when his boys gather the buckets in the sugar-bush, when the high-hole calls long and loud through the hazy distance, when the meadow-lark sends up her clear, silvery shaft of sound from the meadow, when the bush sparrow trills in the orchard, when the soft maples look red against the wood, or their fallen bloom flecks the drying mud in the road, — such mornings are about the most exciting and suggestive of the whole year. How good the fields look, how good the freshly turned earth looks! — one could almost eat it as does the horse; — the stable manure just being drawn out and scattered looks good and smells good; every farmer's house and barn looks inviting; the children on the way to school with their dinner-pails in their hands — how they open a door into the past for you! Sometimes they have sprays of

<sup>1</sup> John Burroughs: *Leaf and Tendril*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

arbutus in their button-holes, or bunches of hepatica. The partridge is drumming in the woods, and the woodpeckers are drumming on dry limbs.

The day is veiled, but we catch such glimpses through the veil. The bees are getting pollen from the pussy-willows and soft maples, and the first honey from the arbutus.

It is at this time that the fruit and seed catalogues are interesting reading, and that the cuts of farm implements have a new fascination. The soil calls to one. All over the country, people are responding to the call, and are buying farms and moving upon them. My father and mother moved upon their farm in the spring of 1828; I moved here upon mine in March, 1874.

I see the farmers, now going along their stone fences and replacing the stones that the frost or the sheep and cattle have thrown off, and here and there laying up a bit of wall that has tumbled down.

There is a rare music now in the unmusical call of the phœbe-bird — it is so suggestive.

The drying road appeals to one as it never does at any other season. When I was a farm-boy, it was about this time that I used to get out of my boots for half an hour and let my bare feet feel the ground beneath them once more. There was a smooth, dry, level place in the road near home, and along this I used to run, and exult in that sense of light-footedness which is so keen at such times. What a feeling of freedom, of emancipation, and of joy in the returning spring I used to experience in those warm April twilights!

I think every man whose youth was spent on the farm, whatever his life since, must have moments at this season when he longs to go back to the soil. How its sounds, its odors, its occupations, its associations, come back to him! Would he not like to return again to help rake up the litter of straw and stalks about the barn, or about the stack on the hill where the grass is starting? Would he not like to help pick the stone from the meadow, or mend the brush fence on the mountain where the sheep roam, or hunt up old Brindle's calf in the woods, or gather oven-wood for his mother to start again the big brick oven with its dozen loaves of rye bread, or see the plow crowding the lingering snowbanks on the side-hill, or help his father break and swing and hatchel the flax in the barnyard?

When I see a farm advertised for rent or for sale in the spring,

I want to go at once and look it over. All the particulars interest me, — so many acres of meadow-land, so many of woodland, so many of pasture — the garden, the orchard, the outbuildings, the springs, the creek — I see them all, and am already half in possession.

Even Thoreau felt this attraction, and recorded in his Journal: "I know of no more pleasing employment than to ride about the country with a companion very early in the spring, looking at farms with a view to purchasing, if not paying for them."

Blessed is the man who loves the soil!

### THE AMATEUR CHESSMAN<sup>1</sup>

I used to envy chess-players. Now I play. My method of learning the game was unprincipled. I learned the moves from the encyclopaedia, the traditions from "Morphy, On Chess," and the practice from playing with another novice as audacious as I. Later, finding some people who could really play, I clove to them until they taught me all that I could grasp. My ultimate ambition is, I suppose, the masterly playing of the game. Its austere antiquity rebukes the mildest amateur into admiration. I therefore strive, and wistfully aspire. Meanwhile, however, I am enjoying the gay excitement of the unskilled player.

There is nobody like the hardy apprentice for getting pleasure out of chess. We find certain delights which no past-master can know; pleasures exclusively for the novice. Give me an opponent not too haughty for my unworthy steel, one who may perhaps forget to capture an exposed bishop of mine, an opponent who, like me, will know the early poetry of mad adventure and the quiet fatalism of unexpected defeat. With this opponent I will engage to enjoy three things which, to Mr. Morphy, immortality itself shall not restore — three things: a fresh delight in the whimsical personality of the various chessmen; the recklessness of uncertainty and of unforeseen adventure; the unprecedented thrill of check-mating my opponent by accident.

Mr. Morphy, I admit, may perhaps have retained through life a personal appreciation of the characters of the pieces: the conserva-

<sup>1</sup> By Frances Lester Warner, from "The Point of View" in *Scribner's Magazine*.

tive habits of the king; the politic, sidelong bishop; the stout little roundhead pawns. But since his forgotten apprenticeship he has not known their many-sided natures. To Mr. Morphy they long since became subject — invariably calculable. With a novice, the men and women of the chess-board regain their individuality and their Old World caprices, their mediæval greatness of heart. Like Aragon and the Plantagenets, they have magnificent leisure for the purposeless and aimless quest. The stiff, kind, circular eyes of my simple boxwood knight stare casually about him as he goes. Irresponsibly he twists among his enemies, now drawing rein in the cross-country path of an angry bishop, now blowing his horn at the very drawbridge of the king. And it is no cheap impunity that he faces in his errant hardihood. My opponent seldom lapses. My knights often die in harness, all unshiven. That risk lends unfailing zest. Most of all, I love my gentle horsemen.

My opponent, too, has her loyalties, quixotic and unshaken. Blindly, one evening, I imperiled my queen. Only the opposing bishop needed to be sacrificed to capture her. The spectators were breathless at her certain fate. But my opponent sets high value upon her stately bishop. Rather this man saved for defense than risked for such a captive, feminist though she be, and queen. With ecclesiastical dignity the bishop withdrew, and my queen went on her tranquil way.

Of all the men, the king reveals himself least readily. A non-committal monarch at best. At times imperial and menacing, my king may conquer, with goodly backing from his yeomen and his chivalry. Sometimes, again, like Lear, he is no longer terrible in arms, his royal guard cut down. And at his death he loves always to send urgently for his bishop, who is solacing, though powerless to save.

All this is typical of our second pleasure, the exhilaration of inadvertent and unpremeditated moves. Inexplicable, for example, this pious return of the outbound bishop at the last battle-cry of the king. At times, however, a move may well be wasted to the end that all may happen decently and in order. My opponent shares with me this respect for ceremony. Together we lament the ruins when a lordly castle falls. Our atrocities are never heartless; we never recriminate.

My opening moves, in general, are characterized by no mean regard for consequences. Let my men rush forth to the edge of the hostile country. Once there, there will be time enough to peer about and reconnoitre and see what we shall see. Meanwhile, the enemy is battering gloriously at my postern-gate, but at least the fight is on! Part of our recklessness in these opening moves consists in our confidential revelations to each other of all our plans and disquieting problems.

"This need n't worry you at present," I remark, planting my castle on an irrational crag. "I'm only putting it there in *case*."

That saves much time. My opponent might otherwise have found it necessary to waste long minutes in trying to fathom the unknowable of my scheme. Without this companionable interchange chess is the most lonely of human experiences. There you sit, a being solitary and unsignaled — a point of thought, a mere center of calculation. You have no partner. All the world is canceled for the time, except, perched opposite you, another hermit intellect implacably estranged and sinister. Oh, no! As yet we discuss our plots.

Poor journeymen players of the royal game! Strange clues to character appear around the friendly chess-board. There is the supposedly neutral observer of the game, who must murmur warnings or lament the ill-judged moves; without him, how would life and chess be simplified? There is the stout-hearted player who refuses to resign though his defeat is demonstrably certain, but continues to jog about the board, eluding actual capture; in life would he resign? There is the player who gives little shrieks at unexpected attacks; the player who explains his mistakes and what he had intended to do instead; the player who makes no sign whether of gloating or of despair. Most striking of all is the behavior of all these when they face the necessity of playing against the handicap of past mistakes; a wrong move may never be retracted by the thoroughbred. No apology, no retracting of the path; we must go on as if the consequences were part of our plan. It lures to allegory, this checkered board, these jousts and far crusades.

Then, on to checkmate, the most perfect type of utter finality, clear-cut and absolute. Shah-mat! Checkmate! The king is

dead. In most conclusions there is something left ragged; something still in abeyance, in reserve. Here, however, is no shading, no balancing of the scales. We win, not by majority, as in cards; success or failure is unanimous. There was one ballot, and that is cast. No matter how ragged the playing that went before, the end of a game of chess is always perfect. It satisfies the spirit. Always at last comes contentment of soul, though it be our king that dies.

The following subjects are suggested as suitable for treatment in informal essays. They can, in many cases, be changed to suit individual experience, can be made either broader or more restricted. Perhaps they will suggest other somewhat similar but more usable subjects.

### PEOPLE

1. The Pleasures of Selfishness.
2. Wondering if the Other Person Knows More.
3. Pipe and Slippers and Dreams.
4. Middle-aged Kittens.
5. Being "Tough."
6. Early Rising.
7. Scientific Eating.
8. The Joys of the Straphanger.
9. Vicarious Possessions in Shop Windows.
10. Shopping with the Bargain Hunter.
11. New Year's Resolutions.
12. The Gossip of the Waiting-Room  
(of a Railroad Station, Doctor's Office, etc.).
13. The Stimulation of Closet Skeletons.
14. Planning Houses.
15. Keeping an Expense Book.
16. The Millinery of the Choir.
17. The Joys of Being Profane before the Consciously Pious.
18. "Darius Greens."
19. Tellers of Dreams.
20. Making the Most of Misfortunes.
21. The Moral Value of Carrying a Cane.
22. Souvenir Hunting.
23. The Person Who Has Always Had "The Same Experience Myself."
24. Prayer-meeting Courtships.
25. The Exhaustion of Repose.
26. "See the Birdie, Darling!"
27. Politeness to Rich Relatives.
28. "It must be so; I Read it in a Book!"

29. "Anyway," as Stevenson said, "I did my darndest."
30. The Moral Rigor of the Nightly Setting-up Exercises.
31. "Hooking Rides."
32. A Society to Forbid Learning to Play the Trombone  
(or Cornet or Piano or anything else).
33. A Sophomore for Life.
34. Country Auctions.
35. The Virtues of Enviousness.
36. The Melancholy of Old Bachelors.
37. Village "Cut-ups."
38. Early Assurances of Doleful Dying.
39. Failing, to make Money, through Failure to make Money.
40. People who never Did Wrong as Children.
41. "Just Wait till I'm Grown-up!"
42. Philosophers' Toothaches.
43. The Morality of Stubbing One's Toe in the Dark.
44. The Dolefulness of Celebrations.
45. What to Do with Bores.
46. The Young and the Still-young Woman.
47. The Satisfaction of Intolerance.
48. The Struggle to be an "Intellectual."
49. Church Socials.
50. The Revelations of Food Sales.
51. White-haired Enthusiasm.
52. "I have It in my Card Index."
53. The Risks of Shaving.
54. The Right to a "Beauty Box."
55. "Hopelessly Sane."
56. The "Job" After Graduation.
57. The Stupidity of Heaven.
58. The Boon Companions of Hell.
59. People Who Remember When You Were "Only So High!"
60. Being a Gentleman though Rich.
61. Great Men One Might Wish to Have Thrashed.
62. The Awful Servant.
63. Morality When the Thermometer Reads 95°.
64. The Technique of Teas.
65. Dangers of Criticism.
66. Starvation or a New Cook?
67. Superior Profanity.
68. The Logic of the Movies.
69. The "Woman's Page."
70. The Neatness of Men.
71. On Taking Off One's Hat.
72. Fashions in Slang.
73. Ambitions at Thirteen.

74. The Joys of Whittling.
75. Learning, without Education.

### THINGS

1. Individuality in Shoes.
2. Alarm Clocks.
3. Rail Fences.
4. Chimney Pots.
5. Illuminated Mottoes.
6. "Fresh Paint."
7. Social Caste of Tombstones.
8. The Lure of Banks.
9. The Witchery of Seed Catalogues.
10. Colonial Windows.
11. Fishing Tackle in the Attic in January.
12. The Invitation of the Label.
13. Stolen Umbrellas.
14. The Dolefulness of the Comic Supplement.
15. The Humorousness of Card Catalogues.
16. The Sweets and Dregs of Tin Roofs.
17. The Tyranny of Remembered Melodies.
18. Friendly Old Clothes.
19. The Age of the Pennant.
20. The Upper Berth.
21. Bills in Dining Cara.
22. Pound Cake.
23. The Toothsome Drumstick.
24. Cravats One Might Wish to Have Worn.
25. Spite Fences.
26. Personality of Teapots.
27. "All You Have to Do Is —"
28. Smoke on the Skyline.
29. The First Long Trousers.
30. The New Pipe.
31. The Old Springboard.
32. Drinking Fountains.
33. The Work-savers — now in the Attic.
34. Candlesticks.
35. The Cantankerousness of Gas Engines.
36. Weeds.
37. The Pride of Uniforms.
38. Leather-covered Books.
39. The Pursuit of Oriental Rugs.
40. Wedding Presents.
41. Bird Baths.

42. The Charm of Oil-Heaters.
43. The Coquetry of Gift Shops.
44. The Passing of the Hitching Post.
45. Names One Might Wish to Have Had.
46. Hall Bedrooms.
47. The Lure of Historic Tablets.
48. The Futility of Diaries.
49. Squeaking Boards at Midnight.
50. The Caste of Letter Heads.

## NATURE

1. Walking in the Rain.
2. Skylines.
3. The Personified Trees of Childhood.
4. Coffee in the Woods.
5. The Psychology of Hens.
6. The Humanity of Barnyards.
7. The Smell of Spring.
8. The Perfume of Bonfires.
9. The Sounds of Running Water.
10. Tracks in the Snow.
11. The Spectrum of Autumn.
12. The Mellowness of Gardens.
13. The Clamor of the Silent Stretches.
14. The Innocent Joy of Not Knowing the Birds.
15. The Rigors of the Sleeping Porch.
16. Inspiration of Mountain-tops.
17. Noises on Cold Winter Nights.
18. Cherries or Robins?
19. The Airedale Pal.
20. Snakes I Have Never Met.
21. The Exhilaration of Winds.
22. Spring Fever.
23. The Philosophy of Campfires.
24. Birds in a City Yard.
25. The Majesty of Thunderstorms.
26. The Music of Snow Water.
27. Hedges.
28. Mountain Springs.
29. The Deep Woods.
30. Summer Clouds.
31. The Companionable Birds.
32. The Dignity of Crows.
33. Trout Pools.
34. Muskrat Trails.

35. The First Flowers of Spring.
36. The Squirrels in the Park.
37. The Dry Sounds in Nature.
38. The Honk of the Flying Wedge.
39. The Pageant of the Warblers.
40. The Challenge of Crags and Ledges.
41. The White-birch Country.
42. Apple Blossom Time.
43. The Majesty of Rivers.
44. Old Orchards.
45. Dried Herbs.
46. Friendly Roadside Bushes.
47. The Exultant Leap of Waterfalls.
48. The Wind in Hemlock, Pine, and Spruce.
49. Tree Houses.
50. The Collection of Pressed Flowers.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EXPOSITORY BIOGRAPHY

BIOGRAPHY is of three kinds. First there is the purely dramatic, such as we find in the plays of Shakespeare, Barrie, and others, and often in novels of the more dramatic kind, which sets the subject to marching up and down before our eyes, with the gestures and the speech of life. Such biography sometimes covers a whole life, more often only a fraction from which we are to judge of the whole. From this kind of biography we draw our own conclusions of the hero; the producer sweeps aside the curtain, displays his people, bows, and leaves us to our comment. This is a most stimulating form of writing. The reader vicariously treads the Roman Forum, or fights under the banner of the great Alfred, or perhaps jostles in the surge of politics, or dreams an artist's dream, or even performs the humble chores of a lonely farmhouse. The personalities may never have lived except in the writer's brain, yet who that has read of Colonel Newcome ever lets fade from his list of friends that delightful gentleman? Who that has once met Falstaff forgets the roaring, jolly old knave? Stevenson gave witness that almost more than from any one else his courage and good cheer in dark days had caught fire from the personality of Shakespeare's heroine Rosalind. If these persons of the imagination can stimulate, how much more ought the subjects of the other two forms of biography to fire the brain, for they are usually taken from real life, are people who have faced the actual problems such as the reader is meeting, people who have perhaps flamed in a glorious career from birth to death or perhaps have gone quietly all their days. The second form of biography is purely analytical. It watches its subject, fol-

lows him through life, and only after this study sets down its words, which aim to state for the reader the meaning of the life. Such biography is illustrated in the brief analyses of Mr. Balfour and Mr. Hardy on page 148. Here the author is the logical thinker who draws the conclusions of careful meditation and says: such was the significance of this man, this woman. The third kind of biography, the expository, the kind with which we are here concerned, attempts to combine the other two, hopes to present the pageant of life which the hero lived, and especially to make an estimate of its importance, its significance. Some novels approach this form when the author stops, as Thackeray often does, to comment on the meaning of his people and their deeds. This kind of biography attempts to accomplish what Carlyle thought should be attempted, the ability to say, "There is my hero, there is the physiognomy and meaning of his appearance and transit on this earth; such was he by nature, so did the world act on him, so he on the world, with such result and significance for himself and us."

### The Problem

The primary object of expository biography is so to build up before the reader's eyes the figure of the hero, so to cast against the background of life the warm personality, so to recreate the lineaments and so to give perspective to the whole that the reader will know the hero, will be able to grasp his hand as a fellow human being with the game of life to play, and will be aware of the significance of the personality to his times and to the reader himself. To *paint the man* is the pleasurable adventure before the writer. Sir Christopher Wren bade us, if we wished a memorial of him, to "look around" upon the arches and the high dim places of his cathedral. So the writer of expository biography must plant himself in the deeds and desires of his hero, must gaze stead-

ily into his eyes until he discovers the center of his being, and must then set down the words, which, if well enough chosen, wisely enough fitted, will outlast the toughest stone. It is in lack of true comprehension of the hero's life that so many expository biographies fail to inspire the reader, in the failure to remember that the writer is not merely "silently expressing old mortality, the ruins of forgotten times," but is trying to catch and record a living force, to live as long as men understand it and are moved by it.

The chief duty of the biographer, then, is to discover the life-problem of his hero, to understand it, to learn how the hero came by it, how he tried to solve it, and what its significance is. Now this is much more easily accomplished with the personalities who have closed their span of existence than with those whom we know still living, with their answer to their problem yet incomplete. Few of us have what Mary Lamb said she possessed, "a knack I know I have of looking into peoples' real character and never expecting them to act out of it — never expecting another to do as I would in the same case." All the facts of personality, the hints and gleams and shadows, bewilder us at times with our friends, and we regret the lack of perspective that reveals the central life-problem. But when we turn to Julius Cæsar, to Jeanne d'Arc, to George Washington, or to some humble dweller of past days, we can see the life whole, can discover the heredity, the natural endowment, the surroundings, the changing deeds and the shifting acquaintances and friends that determined for the hero what the life-problem should be. With the truly remarkable advantage, then, of this central conception, we can fall into cadence with the stride of our hero marching against his problem and can picture forth the struggle and its significance.

In every biography there is this problem. Your hero is at "that game of consequences to which we all sit down, the hanger-back not least," as Stevenson called life, and the

manner in which the hero perceives the "imperious desires and staggering consequences" will determine the flavor of his life. To turn to Stevenson himself we find a white-hot flame of romance cased in a feeble wraith of a body, the heart of the man daring all things, romping through life a deathless youth before the problem of adjustment between body and spirit. Or take the compounding of that tremendous figure, George Washington — adamant integrity, the zeal which, if unchecked, would often have brought the house tumbling about his ears, the endless capacity for indignation, and with these the patience that left men well-nigh dazed and the self-control that made him god-like. Set him in the midst of the hurly-burly of a young nation as doubtful of itself as youth, as eager, as impetuous, as contradictory, with the forces of the Old World pitted against it and with many traitors in its fold. Then conceive the problem of forming wise conjunction between vision and accomplishment, between desire and restraint, and the life of the man is at once unified, centered, illuminated, and made significant.

The same result follows searching to the heart of any hero, high or low, and failure thus to reach the heart causes the pallid uninteresting heaping of details that mean nothing to the reader. No architect can glorify the horizon with the silhouette of a cathedral, nor can he even give a meaning to his accumulation of stone and mosaic and mortar, if he heaps here a pile and there a pile, rears here a chapel, somewhere else as fancy directs lays out an aisle, with no central problem of relationship. Nor can you dignify your hero's nature with a mere basket collection of the flying chips of life — a deed here, a word there, a desire at another time. First, then, discover the problem that your hero faced in the relation of his character to itself and to its times.

### The Chief Aid in Solving the Problem

To discover the problem, really to understand it, requires as your chief tool imaginative sympathy. Without this your writing will leave your hero as flat and shiny as any conscientiously laundered piece of linen. You are to picture him in relief, in the round, to make him live again, step down from his pedestal, and put his shoulder alongside ours and speak to us. We read in a history that faces the necessity of condensation how William the Conqueror "consolidated his domains"—and it means nothing at all to us of stimulating individual value. We do not think of the recalcitrant underlings whose necks he had to force to bow, of the weary eyes that gladly closed at the end of a terrible day's work, of the frequent desire, which at times must be suppressed, perhaps at times gratified, to run a sword through an opposing subject. We forget, in other words, that William was a man, a personality, a bundle of nervous reactions and desires. But the writing fails, as biography, unless we do remember these things. It is in the discovery and understanding of these details and in combining them into a personality that our sympathy is required. No one should set pen to paper in the service of biography who has not a lively personal interest in his hero, who has not an open, loving feeling for him — saint or villain whichever he may be — and desires to make his reader, in turn, *feel* the hero's personality. The ideal biographer is he who can peep out through the eyes of his hero at the sights which he saw, can feel the surge of ambition, of love, of hate, the quickening of the heart at success, and the cold pallor of defeat. We have seen a grown person watch with cold eyes a child who wrestles with a problem of digging a ditch or building a dam or making a harness for the dog, gradually lose the coldness of indifference, forget the gulf of years, kindle to the problem, and finally with delight catch up spade or leather and give assist-

ance. Until you feel a similar thrill of sharing experience with your hero, do not write about him.

Most of us really have this interest but we browbeat ourselves into a belief that a biography, especially an expository biography, must be dull. And, sad though we may be to admit it, most such biographies written for courses in literature or history, are — well, plain stupid. The lives are, to use Samuel Johnson's words, "begun with a pedigree and ended with a funeral," and the dull stretch between is a mere series of events which find unity only in that they all happen to the same person. Such writing is, truly, inexcusable; it is like the railway journey of the unfortunate soul who sees nothing but the clambering aboard and then the folding of the hands for a long dull jouncing until lethargy can be thrown off and it is time to clamber down again. Had the traveler but the insight, or the inclination, he would perceive that his journey is a high adventure spiced with a delicious flavor of challenge and reply. Just so you may find that the writing of expository biography has the charm of life itself. The patient clerk bends over his record sheet and attests the arrival, the departure, of lifeless baggage tossed from hand to hand, from car to car, piled up, taken down and set finally to rest at its destination. But you deal not with lifeless baggage but with the fascinating compound of flesh and blood, of desire and of will, that changes the face of the world. No mere matter-of-fact attitude here, but the perpetual wonder and joy at the turns and flashes of human personality. Rather than be a matter-of-fact man Lamb wisely preferred being a "matter-of-lie" man; the writer of expository biography finds that his material is of such a nature as to be more interesting even than lies. As Sir Thomas Browne said of his not remarkable life, "which to relate were not a history but a piece of poetry and would sound to common ears a fable."

Most of us find that the most fascinating study for man is

Man. Not only do we believe that "man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave," but that while alive he is more alluring than anything else. We might conceivably even argue that Socrates advised "Know thyself" out of fear lest our curiosity about our fellows absorb all our effort. But so great is our fear of the formality of biography that we often belie our sympathy and think that only the large dim figures of the past, kings and potentates, who stride through mighty events, are possible for treatment. Our fear is false. Stevenson was again correct in saying, "The man who lost his life against a hen roost is in the same pickle with the man who lost his life against a fortified place of the first order." No life ever existed — absolutely not one — that was not capable of an absorbing expository biography. The true biographer never takes the point of view of the philosopher who said, "Most men and women are merely one couple more." Rather he knows that, however slight in the sweeping cycle of time a stick of striped candy may be, to the child who drops it into the gutter it is of more weight than a royal scepter. He knows, too, that the ordinary, respectable citizen, one of the "common people," though he never is subject to scandal like a villain and never molds kingdoms like the great figures of history, is nevertheless, in his quiet sphere, a fit héro for biography. He sees that to such a person the gaining, through patient years of toil, of a little homestead, is as great a victory as for an emperor to conquer a country, that to be elected moderator of the town meeting or president of the "literary club" is a large adventure. Barrie had the imagination to see that the day when the six haircloth chairs entered his mother's parlor as the culmination of a long campaign, was a day to her of thrilling adventure, of conquest, of triumph. And yet we are afraid that biography ought to be dull!

Fear of the formality of writing is often the cause of our making expository biography a mere combination of the suc-

cession of events which history shows and a few dull comments about the subject, instead of a real interpretation illuminated with the magic of sympathetic understanding. With this fear upon us we write as awkwardly, as lifelessly, as we deport ourselves at a reception where we forget the pulse of humanity and are clutched by the fear of — we know not what. Such a fear would palsy the hand of him who should attempt to weave even the treasury of facts in the following statement with an estimate of their significance. Writing of General Judah P. Benjamin, of the American Civil War, Mr. Gamaliel Bradford says:

Benjamin was a Jew. He was born a British subject. He made a brilliant reputation at the Louisiana Bar and was offered a seat in the United States Supreme Court. He became United States senator. When his state seceded, he went with it, and filled three cabinet positions under the Confederacy. He fell with the immense collapse of that dream fabric. Then, at the age of fifty-four, he set himself to build up a new fortune and a new glory, and he died one of the most successful and respected barristers in London.<sup>1</sup>

But with fear thrown off, with enthusiastic desire really to understand sympathetically, we find no lack of interest. To any one the terrible storm in the harbor of Apia, when ships were wrecked like straws and lives were spilled out by scores, would offer material because of the horror of the events. But only with imaginative sympathy could we write an expository biography of a humble "Jackie" on a United States boat in the harbor. With such sympathy, as we read that after the gruelling agony of long fruitless fighting against the storm the sailors of the United States Steamship *Trenton*, which was pounding its wooden hull to splinters on the reef, climbed into the rigging and cheered while the more lucky British boat *Calliope* steamed past on her way to safety in the open sea, we are thrilled with the fact

<sup>1</sup> Gamaliel Bradford: *Judah P. Benjamin*. By courtesy of The Atlantic Monthly Company.

that of those gallant seamen every one is worthy of record. Some quiet lad from perhaps a white farmhouse tucked into a little valley, who was honestly doing his duty and hoping for the glory of the time when he should be a petty officer, now while the teeth of death are already bared gloriously lifts up his young voice in gallant recognition of his more successful fellows of the *Calliope!* And yet the official record of the event would imply no possibility of finding romance in this humble individual life.

The "meanest flower that blows" moved the poet's heart; we need not be poets, but only sympathetic human beings, with the great gift of comradeship, to be moved by even the lowliest man or woman. And the objection that rises unbidden and declares us unfit to write expository biography because we have not ourselves known great men is false. Quite truly Carlyle demolishes such objection: "What make ye of Parson White of Selborne? He had not only no great men to look on, but not even men; merely sparrows and cock-chafers; yet has he left us a *Biography* of these; which, under its title *Natural History of Selborne*, still remains valuable to us; which has copied a little sentence or two *faithfully* from the Inspired Volume of Nature, and is itself not without inspiration. Go ye and do likewise." Certainly if you face the setting forth of the life of some large figure of the past you have a fascinating pageant to unriddle, to centralize. And just as surely if you turn to the familiar figures of your home town, of your family history, and really lay your spirit alongside, you will find deep significance for yourself and for your reader. For every human being has its Waterloo. Sometimes we play Wellington, sometimes Bonaparte, but whether winning or losing we all tread the same way, and the fight is as significant to each as ever the victory or defeat of Waterloo was to Wellington or Napoleon.

### The Process of Solving the Problem

With this great requisite of imaginative sympathy that sees value in all human beings, then, we set out on our chief task, to find the life-problem of our particular hero. This necessitates definition and analysis. Somehow we must find the sphere in which our hero moved, the group to which he belonged, and must then discover the qualities that he showed in the group which made him a real individual. Such definition and analysis will appear when we examine the character of the hero and the events in his life.

#### I. Defining the Character

In placing the subject of biography in a group we must take care to unify the character and at the same time to escape making him merely typical. A biography is a portrait, and if it omits the peculiar lineaments that distinguish the hero from all others, if it overlooks the little details of personality, it is valueless, and certainly uninteresting. The names of characters in old dramas, such as *Justice Clement*, *Justice Shallow*, *Fastidious Brisk*, *Sir Politick Would-be*, and of some of Scott's characters such as *Poundtext*, *Rev. Gabriel Kettle-drummle*, *Mr. Holdenough*, indicate the central point of view of the characters but do not individualize them. Before we are really interested in these people we must see the personal traits that give charm. The unifying and centralizing of the character will be accomplished through discovering the fundamental nature. When Cavour wrote, "I am a son of Liberty, and it is to her that I owe all that I am," he classified himself at once through revealing the inner heart of his being. Mr. George Whibley gives both outward action and inward attitude when he writes, "George Buchanan was the type and exemplar of the wandering Scot." So a writer in the New York *Nation*<sup>1</sup> classifies William James by finding

<sup>1</sup> Vol. 94, p. 363.

the controlling motives of his life. "He was a force of expansion, not a force of concentration. He 'opens doors and windows,' shakes out a mind that has long lain in the creases of prejudice. He is the most vital and gifted exemplar of intellectual sympathy." Again, Mr. Bradford, in characterizing General Sherman, writes, "Sherman is like one of our clear blue January days, with a fresh north wind. It stimulates you. It inspires you. But crisp, vivid, intoxicating as it is, it seems to me that too prolonged enjoyment of such weather would dry my soul till the vague fragrance of immortality was all gone out of it." And when some one asked Goldsmith, referring to Boswell, "Who is this Scotch cur at Johnson's heels?" Goldsmith replied, "He is not a cur, he is only a bur. Tom Davies flung him at Johnson in sport, and he has the faculty of sticking." Each of these characterizations classifies the subject; no one of them makes him a distinct personality, for thousands have been wandering Scots, forces of expansion, burs. The typifying is of great value in establishing the central point of view of the subject, but it cannot be left to stand alone in a real portrait.

It is necessary that we define our hero by determining the class to which he belongs, but such definition brings a great danger, the danger of making a warped interpretation. At once we must take care, when we discover the type of a man, not to overwork the type qualities, not to make everything conform to this inner core, whether the detail properly fits or not. For example, once we have called a man a *liberal* we shall need to guard against denying the conservative acts which are in themselves contradictory of the general nature though in the large they fuse with it. Such a tag is likely, if not guarded against, to make the writer the victim of a kind of color-blindness in character, so that he can see only the crimson of *liberal*, the lavender of *conservative*. In a sentence like the following there lurks the possibility of over-working a point of view, of riding rough-shod over details

that do not immediately swing into line. Speaking of General Hooker, "General Walker observes shrewdly, 'He was handsome and picturesque in the extreme, but with a fatally weak chin' . . . Bear it in mind in our further study." Spontaneity of reaction to the hero is in possible danger of extinction when the biographer has solidly set down the class name. The same danger is at hand when we find and state the controlling motive of the hero's life, as when we say that he was primarily ambitious, or exhibited above everything else courage. We need be careful lest trivial matters be made to appear ambitious, thrillingly courageous, and lest we deny what seems contradictory. In the following characterization of the historian Green by his friend the Rev. Mr. Haweis we find no such cramping effect, but a welling forth of creative impression that makes Green live before our eyes.

That slight nervous figure, below the medium height; that tall forehead, with the head prematurely bald; the quick but small eyes, rather close together; the thin mouth, with lips seldom at rest, but often closed tightly as though the teeth were clenched with an odd kind of latent energy beneath them; the slight, almost feminine hands; the little stoop; the quick alert step; the flashing exuberance of spirits; the sunny smile; the torrent of quick invective, scorn, or badinage, exchanged in a moment for a burst of sympathy or a delightful and prolonged flow of narrative — all this comes back to me vividly! And what narrative, what anecdote, what glancing wit! What a talker! A man who shrank from society, and yet was so fitted to adorn and instruct every company he approached, from a parochial assembly to a statesman's reception! But how enchanting were my walks with him in the Victoria Park, that one outlet of Stepney and Bethnal Green! I never in my life so lost count of time with any one before or since. . . . I have sometimes, after spending the evening with him at my lodgings, walked back to St. Philip's Parsonage, Stepney, towards midnight, talking; then he has walked back with me in the summer night, talking; and when the dawn broke it has found

us belated somewhere in the lonely Mile End Road, still unexhausted, and still talking.<sup>1</sup>

But when we have inveighed as much as we need against the dangers of classification, we must swing round to the first statement that for unifying the character and giving it fundamental significance such classification is of great importance.

Merely to find the type to which a character belongs is not sufficient; such a process leaves the character stamped, to be sure, but without interest. We care for living people not chiefly because of their type but because of their individuality, the little traits that set them apart from their fellows. The next step, therefore, is to discover and reveal the individuality. The type to which a character belongs is shown by the large sweep of his whole life; his individuality is revealed often most clearly in the slight incidents by the way. For this reason the personal anecdote assumes importance as adding both interest and completeness that consists in filling in the broad expanses of the portrait with the lines of individual expression. This does not mean that all anecdotes are of value for expository biography; only those which are truly in the stream of personality, which help to establish either the type or the individual. The whimsical nature of the little incident which Mr. George Whibley<sup>2</sup> relates of the "scoundrel" Tom Austin is of value not because it makes a picturesque note at a hanging, but because it really helps to establish the full picture of the man: "When Tom Austin was being haltered for hanging, the Chaplain asked him had he anything to say. 'Only, there's a woman yonder with some curds and whey, and I wish I could have a pennyworth of them before I am hanged, because I don't know when I shall see any again.'" It is easily said that Lincoln was a great democratic soul and a great humorist. These are two

<sup>1</sup> Haweis: *Music and Morals*. By courtesy of the publishers, Longmans, Green & Co., New York City.

<sup>2</sup> *A Book of Scoundrels*.

useful tags. But when we know that to the Englishman who remarked, "In England, you know, no gentleman blacks his own shoes," he replied, "Whose does he black, then?" we feel the peculiar tang of the Lincoln personality along with the type qualities of democrat and humorist. After we have classified Washington as an austere, cold, unemotional being, we find both corrective for a too narrow classification, and insight into the peculiar qualities of the man when we read how he swore "like an angel from Heaven" on the famous occasion of the encounter with Lee. For the anecdote is, we see, really in the main flow of Washington's nature. General Wolfe is tagged as a romantic young warrior but takes on both interest and personality when we read of his repeating Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" as his men silently rowed him to the battle on the Heights of Abraham. The personality of Madame de Staël's father is largely illuminated when we learn that though the little daughter sat primly at table as long as her mother remained in the room, as soon as she retired, with a cry of delight the child flung her napkin at her father's head. Anecdote is highly useful so long as we remember that it is not for adornment but for revelation, not primarily for interest — though that is an important function — but rather for proving in dramatic particular the quality which we claim for our hero. Properly chosen anecdotes should be the high lights in the proof of qualities which the writer's exposition establishes in more sober manner. And of course they also serve to show the differentia which make the character an individual, and thus help to complete the definition.

## 2. Analyzing the Character

### a. *Heredity*

When once we have defined the character, have found its class and to some extent its differentia, we can by analysis

add to our comprehension of it and to the distinguishing personal traits. We must break up the character and see its manifestations and the results of the influences that molded it. Heredity at once demands recognition. It is not insignificant that Emerson was the descendant of a long line of New England clergymen. The bravery of Stevenson is accounted for partly by the doughty old builder of lighthouses, his grandfather Robert Stevenson. Descent holds often, apparently, a guiding rein in directing a character into its life-problem. Emerson's problem was comparatively simplified, so far as personal integrity concerned him, for he was by nature good. Lowell testified that it was perfectly natural for himself to turn to literature, since in his childhood he had become so accustomed to the smell of Russia leather in the bindings of his father's books. The following sentence<sup>1</sup> shows the grip of descent through the centuries which is not disguised by the man's name: "The Mr. Balfour of those days has been altogether outgrown by the Admiralty First Lord of the existing coalition, a Balfour in name only, in breadth of shoulders, thickness of frame, heaviness of jaw, and proportions of forehead a Cecil marvelously recalling, not only his illustrious uncle, but that relative's Elizabethan ancestors." "Men are what their mothers made them," says Emerson. "You may as well ask a loom which weaves huckabuck why it does not make cashmere, as expect poetry from this engineer, or a chemical discovery from that jobber." Partly, at least, the life-problem is determined by the heredity; to each there is but one future, "and that is already determined in his lobes and described in that little fatty face, pig-eye, and squat form," to quote Emerson again even though he lays undue stress, perhaps, upon the power of descent. In the paragraph which follows you will find an interesting account of the ancestry of O. W. Holmes, with a statement also of the essential quiet of his life, which

<sup>1</sup> T. H. S. Escott: *Great Victorians*. T. Fisher Unwin, London.

is nevertheless so often thought of as worthy of biographical treatment.

Dr. Holmes came of this good, old, unmixed New England stock that ran back to Hell on the one side in the severest orthodoxy and up to Heaven on the other in large liberality. He discovered that the title deeds were all in Heaven — while all other claims were by squatters' rights outside the Garden of Eden. So Dr. Holmes grew into a Unitarian and proceeded to cultivate the descent which lies outside Paradise. His father was a minister, so beautiful in countenance, Holmes tells us, that he could never have believed an unkind thing, and his mother of different line was a Liberal by descent. Holmes was born, too, to the conflicting traditions of Yale and Harvard; but beyond being born, practically nothing ever happened to him afterwards. He had a little group of friends who were actually companions. During his whole life, except the two years of medical study in Europe in the beginning of his career, and the "hundred days in Europe" celebrated in one of his later books, he was never further away from Boston, for the most part, than Salem or Beverly, that Beverly, to which he referred in replying to a friend who had addressed a letter to him from "Manchester-by-the-Sea," as "Beverly-by-the-Depot." He went some summers to Pittsfield where he had a summer house, and where the sparkling Berkshire air seemed to suit his effervescent mind. But he was never "quite at home beyond the smell of the Charles River."<sup>1</sup>

### *b. Interests*

Then when your hero grows up, what are his interests? To what profession or kind of work does he turn? Where does he find the satisfaction for his energy that searches an outlet? Does he, like Thomas Carlyle, try one and another profession only to fail and be driven, finally, into the one work in which he could find the answer to the life-problem that his personality presents? When his profession is chosen, what are his interests? Does he work out his problem in a

<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Slicer: *From Post to Premier*. By courtesy of the publishers, The Grolier Society, London.

narrowly restricted field, or does he call in the powers of a wide range of significant pursuits? No expository biography of Leonardo da Vinci can overlook the astounding breadth of the man's activity, especially as shown in the remarkable document which he presented to Ludovico Sforza arranging his attainments under nine different headings in military engineering and adding a tenth for civil engineering and architecture,— and finally throwing in, as a suggestion, his worth as painter and sculptor! There were the compounds of a life-problem sufficiently complex to satisfy the most captious. Or if the hero never moves from a tiny hamlet, treads only one path — as Pericles is said to have done between house and office during the great days of his power — the fact is significant. The grasp of ideas within whatever field the hero may choose is also important. The distinction between the personality that is merely efficient in handling facts, and the personality that dominates the facts and drives them at his bidding, that shows real power, has direct bearing on the nature and the solution of the life-problem.

### *c. Beliefs*

Nor can you overlook the hero's beliefs, whether in ethics or religion, in politics, in the laws of society. In the analysis of Mr. Balfour, on page 148, at once is apparent the large influence on his answer that is caused by his sophistication. The bravery of the Stoic, the voluptuous sentimentality of many religious people of modern times, vitally affect the nature of the character which possesses them. If your hero is by nature an aristocrat, if his sympathies are limited to the few choice people of the world, his life-problem is radically different from that of the natural democrat like Abraham Lincoln. Finally, whatever ideas he may hold about the relation in society of man to man, of man to woman, will inevitably influence his solution of his particular question,

just as his beliefs are themselves partly determined by his physical being.

#### *d. Friends*

Closely allied with his beliefs will be his choice of friends. Has he the gift of familiarity, or does he struggle in vain to break through the bars of personality, or is he terrified at the gulf between himself and another? Does he regard friends as useful instruments, as pleasant companions, or as objects of devoted affection? And how do his friends react to him? It is worth remembering that the boy Tennyson wrote, in grief, "Byron is dead!" — not only the boy but the older poet is illuminated by the words. Stephen A. Douglas holding Lincoln's hat beside the platform while the Gettysburg Address was being delivered showed not only the mellowness of his own nature but the commanding power of friendship that Lincoln possessed. The number of friends and the range of their activity — whether selected from all sections of human activity or from the hero's own more limited field — are important.

#### *e. Deeds*

Finally, the deeds of the hero are of the greatest significance in indicating how he met his life-problem. Did he "greet the unknown with a cheer" or did he like a doubtful bather shrink back from plunging into the stream of activity? Were his deeds actuated by generous motives, or by petty? "If," says Stevenson, "it is for fame that men do brave actions, they are only silly fellows after all." Macbeth strode through large events, as did Robert E. Lee, yet the dominating motives were quite different, and these motives throw the utmost light on the fundamentals of character.

Before you write, then, first define your hero, find his type and his individuality, and then analyze his character to de-

termine his descent, his intellectual interests, his beliefs, his friends, and his deeds. And remember that these are not in water-tight compartments, separated from each other, but that they fuse together to make the personality, to create the life-problem, and to answer it.

### The Use of Events in the Life

Dramatic biography is almost wholly the moving events of life. The evil of cheap fiction is partly that it will be nothing but events, that only dust will be raised, no meaning found. Expository biography may err in the opposite direction and exclude the "moving show," become only abstract analysis and definition. You must guard against this, because absence of events both complicates the writer's task and makes his success with the reader more problematic. Moreover, since so largely the positive personality of the hero will express itself in action, since largely through events we shall discover what the life-problem is and especially how it is met, to omit the flow of events is to lame the interpretation. All readers, it is well to remember, have the child's desire for more than mere information about the machine; they wish to "see it go." The vitality of fiction is always increased by dramatic presentation. Since you have a real character to make vital, bring to your writing the devices that make characters real. Carlyle<sup>1</sup> well characterizes the denatured style of treating living beings:

Those modern Narrations, of the Philosophic kind, where "Philosophy, teaching by Experience," has to sit like owl on housetop, *seeing* nothing, *understanding* nothing, uttering only, with solemnity enough, her perpetual and most wearisome hoo-hoo: — what hope have we, except the for the most part fallacious one of gaining some acquaintance with our fellow-creatures, though dead and

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Carlyle: "Biography," in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

vaniſhed, yet dear to us; how they got along in those old days, ſuffering and doing; to what extent, and under what circumstances, they resisted the Devil and triumphed over him, or ſtruk their colors to him, and were trodden under foot by him; how, in ſhort, the perenniaſ Battle went, which men name Life, which we also in these new days, with indifferent fortune have to fight, and muſt bequeath to our ſons and grandſons to go on fighting. . . .

#### a. *Choice of Events*

The question at once arises, what events ſhall the writer ſelect? The total course is mapped for you: there is the pedigree, there the birth, and finally there the funeral. These are inescapable. Just ſo, for moſt heroes, marriage. But to choose only those facts that are common to all, to make your hero do only the conventionally unavoidable things, will leave him without personality. The question is, what did he do that was peculiar to himſelf, what reaction to life did he alone, of all the myriads, make? It is true that moſt men and women ſpend their time at their profession or appointed task, whatever it may be, but what the reader cries for is *how* did they ſpend their time and energy? It is not ſufficient that you tell your reader that Robert Franz labored at his profession of music. What you muſt do is to show how, in poverty, which, but for the inexhaustible kindness of Liszt, would have been unrelieved, with total deafneſs upon him, with his musician's-fingers twisted and uſeless with paralysis, and with only ſlight recognition from the world for his efforts, he quite beautifully ſubordinated his own personality for the ſake of his art and for years labored in unremunerative love at the unwritten harmonies of Bach and Handel that the public might have complete realization of the otherwise crippled productions. When you tell that, your reader will understand *Robert Franz*, not merely a ſomebody. Choose, then, the events that all ſhare in common if they are of value in giving a framework for your nar-

rative presentation, but especially choose those events that in their nature illuminate the personality and complement your analysis.

We think of events as being public. There is also the hero's private life. Often, especially with the more humble heroes, the home life is more important than the public deeds, brings out more clearly the real man than any amount of marching in the market place or discussing in the public square. The incident related of Robert E. Lee when he was President of Washington College is more revealing, almost, of his greatness of heart than a far more important deed of the great General. When a sophomore to whom Lee had recommended more intense application to work, with the warning of possible failure, remarked, "But, General, you failed," Lee quietly replied, "I hope that you may be more fortunate than I." To neglect either public or private life makes the biography less valuable; light upon the personality from whatever honest source is to be eagerly sought.

### *b. Relation of Events to Personality*

With your choice made, you yet face the difficulty of uniting events and personality. It is not that you have parallel lines, one of action and one of character; the two lines join and become one. You have the choice of observing the personality through the medium of events, or events through the medium of personality. Of the two, the latter is to be preferred. To understand the personality we need to know whether it controls and directs events, or merely receives them. Into every life a large measure of chance enters. Does the personality merely receive the events, or does it master chance? Suppose that the following analysis<sup>1</sup> of two widely different characters is correct, just:

Mozart — grace, liberty, certainty, freedom, and precision of style, and exquisite and aristocratic beauty, serenity of soul, the

<sup>1</sup> Amiel's *Journal*.

health and talent of the master, both on a level with his genius; Beethoven — more pathetic, more passionate, more torn with feeling, more intricate, more profound, less perfect, more the slave of his genius, more carried away by his fancy or his passion, more moving, and more sublime than Mozart. . . . One is serene, the other serious. . . . The first is stronger than destiny, because he takes life less profoundly; the second is less strong, because he has dared to measure himself against deeper sorrows. . . . In Mozart the balance of the whole is perfect, and art triumphs; in Beethoven feeling governs everything and emotion troubles his art in proportion as it deepens it.

Now we know that Mozart's attitude toward patrons was sweetly deferential and graceful, whereas Beethoven rushed into the courtyard of his patron Prince Lobkowitz, shouting, "Lobkowitz donkey! Lobkowitz donkey!!" and when, in the company of Goethe, he once met an archduke, though Goethe made a profound bow with bared head, Beethoven reached up, jammed his hat down tighter upon his head, and, rigidly erect, stalked by without recognition of rank. These actions of Beethoven are emotionally tempestuous. We have our choice of interpreting them as resulting from his personality or of determining his personality as revealed by the deeds. In general it is better to view deeds and events in the light of personality.

### *c. Relation to Society and Times*

Events happen to more than the hero alone; he is a member of society. It is necessary, therefore, to link the events of his life to the current of his times, to fit him into the background against which his life was played. How was he affected, what influence did he exert, what offices or positions of trust did he hold? Often, of course, estimate of the personality will be considerably determined by his relations with his contemporaries. You need to bear two cautions in mind: first, not to misjudge a man because moral or social

standards have shifted since his times; and second, not to introduce so much matter about his relationships as to obscure the outlines of his personality or as to relegate him to less than the chief position. Imaginative sympathy will be sufficient to prevent the first. If you really look through your hero's eyes at the life that he saw, with his standards in mind, though you may have to condemn his attitude from a more modern point of view, you will be able to see that his deeds are quite comprehensible, that perhaps, had you been in his place, you would have acted likewise. We no longer decorate important bridges with the heads of criminals set on pikes, as our ancestors did, nor do we burn supposed witches. But though we condemn Edward the First of England for the one and the Salem Puritans for the other, we can still love both Edward and the Puritans — if we have imaginative sympathy. The second caution requires simply that you make your hero dominate the scene. Now this is not an easy task when you are reviewing, in many pages, the gorgeous pageant of an age. We can easily imagine that if Parr had written the Life of Johnson which he said would have been so much superior to that by Boswell, and had included the threatened "view of the literature of Europe," the poor old hero would have been roughly jostled away behind the furniture. Mr. Barrett Wendell paid Carlyle a tribute of the highest kind in writing of his *Frederick the Great*:

Such a mass of living facts — for somehow Carlyle never lets a fact lack life — I had never seen flung together before; and yet the one chief impression I brought away from the book was that to a degree rare in even small ones it possessed as a whole the great trait of unity. In one's memory, each fact by and by fell into its own place; the chief ones stood out; the lesser sank back into a confused but not inextricable mass of throbbing vitality. And from it all emerged more and more clearly the one central figure who gave his name to the whole — Frederick of Prussia. It was as they bore

on him from all quarters of time and space, and as he reacted on them far and wide, that all these events and all these people were brought back out of their dusty graves to live again.<sup>1</sup>

Make your hero stand near the footlights, then, and take care that he be not in the shadows of the wings.

#### *d. Rhetorical Value of Events*

From a purely rhetorical point of view the inclusion of the events in the hero's life is important because it offers a useful structural scheme for the writing, the chronological order. The exact succession of events need not be followed, surely; sometimes the intended effect will demand a reversal of actual order, but the relation in time will be found valuable for showing the growth of personality, of intellectual grasp, of influence upon the world. Do not, then, neglect the active life of your hero. By presenting it you will find the task of composition lightened, you will help to establish the personality, and you will give to the writing the dramatic vitality that is so much desired by the reader.

#### The Problem of Telling the Truth

However imaginatively sympathetic you may be in interpreting your hero, however carefully you may try to find his life-problem, and however well you may attempt to define and analyze his personality, you will be confronted with one almost insuperable problem — how to tell the truth. In no form of exposition is this problem more difficult. For we are more moved by human personality than by anything else, more "drawn to" a person than to a machine, more affected by the comparatively parallel problem of another human being than by the inanimate existence of wood and steel. Long observation and study of our heroes seems often to make us even less fitted to estimate their worth, for we reach

<sup>1</sup> Barrett Wendell: *English Composition*. By courtesy of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City. Copyright, 1891.

the state of companionship with them where we resent any fact that does not tally with our formed judgment, and are tempted to exclude it. Mr. Gamaliel Bradford divides biographers into "those who think they are impartial and those who know they are not." Partiality operates, of course, both for and against personalities. To quote Mr. Bradford again, "Gardiner, for all his fairness, obviously praises the Puritans because they were Puritans, the Cavaliers although they were Cavaliers." Adulation and damnation are the logical extremes which result from a too operative blind spot on the retina of judgment. You must remember and cling to the fact that no man is perfect and no man wholly bad. Much as Boswell loved Johnson he had the good sense to write, of his biography, "And he will be seen as he really was, for I profess to write, not his panegyric, which must be all praise, but his Life; which, great and good as he was, must not be supposed to be entirely perfect." George Washington has terribly suffered in the estimates of later times because of the desire to make him perfect. The true expository biographer will conceal nothing that is significant, whether he wishes, in spite of himself, perhaps, that it did not exist.

The best cure for the errors of falsity from over-love or over-condemnation is still sane imaginative sympathy. Stevenson made perhaps the greatest personal triumph in his portraiture when he drew Weir of Hermiston, the dour old "hanging judge" who so outraged by his life all the author's feelings and is yet so presented that the reader loves him despite his inhumanity, really perceives that an honest, even if tough, heart beat in his breast. Another safeguard is absence of desire to make rhetorical effect. An aureole is picturesque, horns and hoofs add piquancy; the hand itches to deck the hero as saint or to fit him out as devil. But you must subordinate any such cheap desire, must write with the restraint that comes from seeing your hero steady

and seeing him whole. Balance is the golden word. "This thing is true," wrote Emerson, "but that is also true." The vulgarity of the superlatives of political campaigns has no place in your pages.

This imaginatively sympathetic attitude must not rely on itself alone, but must employ the other safeguard against untruth, must passionately pursue facts, and facts, and still facts to make the conception of the hero complete and to give the writing that so much desired quality of fullness. The very greatest care is necessary to determine what facts are true and what are fallacious. You are largely at the mercy of your second or third or tenth-hand sources when you write of historical characters. When your hero is a living person you must challenge the report of your own senses and general experience lest you admit what is false or omit what is significant.

### **The Danger of Making a "Lesson"**

And when you have assembled all your facts, and have determined upon your interpretation of the hero, take the greatest caution that you do not try to make the life a "lesson." Presumably a child never more earnestly desires to commit murder than when some little Willie or Susie has been held up as a model. If Willie and Susie escape with only kicked shins, they may count luck benevolent. Your duty is to understand and love, not to preach about the character. You are to give us an estimate of the great adventure of this person through life, and leave to us to make the moral, if any is to be made. If the life has a message, the reader will catch it; if it has not, silence is virtuous.

### **The Rhetorical Form**

Finally, the rhetorical problem of forming your material presents itself. First of all do not forget that all the charms

of style of which you are capable should be summoned to your aid. Since you deal with the fascinating subject of human personality your writing should not be dull. All too many biographical essays begin stupidly. When a first sentence reads, "Augustine was born at Tagaste, near Carthage (about forty miles south of it), North Africa, November 13, A.D. 354, seven years after the birth of Chrysostom," a reader hardly finds a warmly inviting gleam in the writer's eye; he continues to read only if he brought determination with him. But when Mr. Charles Whibley begins, of Captain Hind, "James Hind, the Master Thief of England, the fearless Captain of the Highway, was born at Chipping Norton in 1618"; or of Haggart, "David Haggart was born at Canonmills, with no richer birthright than thievish fingers and a left hand of surpassing activity"; or of Sir Thomas Overbury, "Thomas Overbury, whose haggard ghost still walks in the secret places of the Tower, was born a squire's son, in 1581," — when he uses such sentences to introduce the hero to the reader, the ejaculatory "Eh?" takes voice and the reader canters down the new delightful lane where a finger beckons. Whether you use anecdote, or quotation, or important fact, or statement of birth, or description, let your beginning invite and not dismay.

The chief structural problem is, without doubt, to fuse the analyzed elements of deeds and friends and interests and others into one organic whole. If you use the chronological sequence of events, which has already been discussed, showing how each event or group of events indicates the character, you will have an easily followed plan. Such a plan, or that of treating the whole life from the point of view of the central, controlling motive, is the ideal method. If you choose to unify the whole by showing how events, friends, interests of various kinds, and the other manifestations of the hero's life all establish the central motive, you will have a more difficult, though more elastic form. With this plan

you can distribute the details in the points where they will be of most value, can, for example, indicate a change in the hero's nature by approaching through an event, a friendship, a turning of tastes in reading or in general interests. The difficulty here lies in the tendency toward such dispersion of details as to destroy unity even though to gain this is the chief intention. In the face of this difficulty you may use a third method, which is likely to be less pleasing, less artistic, but more easily applied. You can divide your material under the headings "events," "friends," "heredity," "interests," and then can treat each group, by itself, from the central point of view. This is a useful method, and in complicated lives it is sometimes the only method that is reasonably easy to handle. Closely similar to this method is that of dividing your material under the headings of the ways in which your hero affected his times, the ways in which he was known. Thus you might treat of the reputation as converser, as organizer, as literary man, as public servant, as friend of the poor, or whatever heading your hero's life affords.

Whatever method you may employ, you should remember that a human life does not appear in separate, distinct phases, that a man does not seem to be now this, now that, but rather all details, of whatever nature, mingle and fuse into a unit, however complicated it may be. You should attempt, then, to make one main thread, of however many colors it may be woven, rather than a series of parallel threads. Note how Thackeray neatly unites various phases and forms of interest in Goldsmith's life,<sup>1</sup> so neatly that as you casually read you are not aware of the diversity of material — though it is there — but think rather of the total effect.

If, then, you assume the attitude of imaginative sympathy, and study your hero until you know what his particular life-problem was, what his type and what his individuality, and

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the chapter.

with love and yet restraint make your estimate, aiming at truth to character and to facts of his life, you will produce writing that will be more than a mere scholar's document, writing that will warm the heart of your reader to a new personality and will be a friend of a winter evening fireside.

### OLIVER GOLDSMITH<sup>1</sup>

“Jeté sur cette boule,  
Laid, chétif et souffrant;  
Étouffé, dans la foule,  
Faute d'être assez grand;

“Une plainte touchante  
De ma bouche sortit.  
Le bon Dieu me dit: Chante,  
Chante, pauvre petit.

“Chanter, ou je m'abuse,  
Est ma tâche ici-bas.  
Tous ceux qu'ainsi j'amuse,  
Ne m'aimeront-ils pas?”

In these charming lines of Béranger,<sup>2</sup> one may fancy described the career, the suffering, the genius, the gentle nature of Goldsmith, and the esteem in which we hold him. Who of the millions whom he has amused does n't love him? To be the most beloved of English writers, what a title that is for a man! A wild youth, wayward, but full of tenderness and affection, quits the country village where his boyhood has been passed in happy musing, in idle shelter, in fond longing to see the great world out of doors, and achieve fame and fortune; and after years of dire struggle and neglect and poverty, his heart turning back as fondly to his native place as it had longed eagerly for change when sheltered there, he writes a book and a poem, full of the recollections and feelings of home; he paints the friends and scenes of his youth, and peoples Auburn and Wakefield with remembrances of Lissoy. Wander he must, but he carries away a home-relic with him, and dies with it on his breast. His nature is truant; in repose it longs for change, — as on the

<sup>1</sup> William Makepeace Thackeray: *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> For translation, see page 296.

journey it looks back for friends and quiet. He passes to-day in building an air-castle for to-morrow, or in writing yesterday's elegy; and he would fly away this hour, but that a cage and necessity keep him. What is the charm of his verse, of his style and humor? — his sweet regrets, his delicate compassion, his soft smile, his tremulous sympathy, the weakness which he owns? Your love for him is half pity. You come hot and tired from the day's battle, and this sweet minstrel sings to you. Who could harm the kind vagrant harper? Whom did he ever hurt? He carries no weapon save the harp on which he plays to you and with which he delights great and humble, young and old, the captains in the tents or the soldiers round the fire, or the women and children in the villages, at whose porches he stops and sings his simple songs of love and beauty. With that sweet story of "The Vicar of Wakefield" he has found entry into every castle and hamlet in Europe. Not one of us, however busy or hard, but once or twice in our lives has passed an evening with him, and undergone the charm of his delightful music.

Goldsmith's father was no doubt the good Doctor Primrose, whom we all of us know. Swift was yet alive, when the little Oliver was born at Pallas, or Pallasmore, in the county of Longford, in Ireland. In 1730, two years after the child's birth, Charles Goldsmith removed his family to Lissoy, in the county Westmeath, that sweet "Auburn" which every person who hears me has seen in fancy. Here the kind parson brought up his eight children; and loving all the world, as his son says, fancied all the world loved him. He had a crowd of poor dependants besides those hungry children. He kept an open table, round which sat flatterers and poor friends, who laughed at the honest rector's many jokes, and ate the produce of his seventy acres of farm. Those who have seen an Irish house in the present day can fancy that one at Lissoy. The old beggar still has his allotted corner by the kitchen turf; the maimed old soldier still gets his potatoes and buttermilk; the poor cottier still asks his honor's charity and prays God bless his reverence for the sixpence; the ragged pensioner still takes his place by right of sufferance. There's still a crowd in the kitchen, and a crowd round the parlor table; profusion, confusion, kindness, poverty. If an Irishman comes to London to make his fortune,

he has a half-dozen of Irish dependants who take a percentage of his earnings. The good Charles Goldsmith left but little provision for his hungry race when death summoned him; and one of his daughters being engaged to a Squire of rather superior dignity, Charles Goldsmith impoverished the rest of his family to provide the girl with a dowry.

The small-pox, which scourged all Europe at that time, and ravaged the roses off the cheeks of half the world, fell foul of poor little Oliver's face when the child was eight years old, and left him scarred and disfigured for his life. An old woman in his father's village taught him his letters, and pronounced him a dunce. Paddy Byrne, the hedge-schoolmaster, then took him in hand; and from Paddy Byrne he was transmitted to a clergyman at Elphin. When a child was sent to school, in those days, the classic phrase was that he was placed under Mr. So-and-So's *ferule*. Poor little ancestors! it is hard to think how ruthlessly you were birched, and how much of needless whipping and tears our small forefathers had to undergo! A relative — kind Uncle Contarine — took the main charge of little Noll; who went through his school-days righteously doing as little work as he could, robbing orchards, playing at ball, and making his pocket-money fly about whenever fortune sent it to him. Everybody knows the story of that famous "Mistake of a Night," when the young schoolboy, provided with a guinea and a nag, rode up to the "best house" in Ardagh, called for the landlord's company over a bottle of wine at supper, and for a hot cake for breakfast in the morning, — and found, when he asked for the bill, that the best house was Squire Featherstone's, and not the inn for which he mistook it. Who does not know every story about Goldsmith? That is a delightful and fantastic picture of the child dancing and capering about in the kitchen at home, when the old fiddler gibed at him for his ugliness, and called him *Aesop*; and little Noll made his repartee of: —

"Heralds proclaim aloud this saying:  
See *Aesop* dancing and his monkey playing."

One can fancy a queer, pitiful look of humor and appeal upon that little scarred face, the funny little dancing figure, the funny little brogue. In his life and writings, which are the honest expres-

sion of it, he is constantly bewailing that homely face and person; anon he surveys them in the glass ruefully, and presently assumes the most comical dignity. He likes to deck out his little person in splendor and fine colors. He presented himself to be examined for ordination in a pair of scarlet breeches, and said honestly that he did not like to go into the Church because he was fond of colored clothes. When he tried to practise as a doctor, he got by hook or by crook a black velvet suit, and looked as big and as grand as he could, and kept his hat over a patch on the old coat. In better days he bloomed out in plum-color, in blue silk, and in new velvet. For some of those splendors the heirs and assignees of Mr. Filby, the tailor, have never been paid to this day; perhaps the kind tailor and his creditor have met and settled their little account in Hades.

They showed until lately a window at Trinity College, Dublin, on which the name of *O. Goldsmith* was engraved with a diamond. Whose diamond was it? Not the young sizar's, who made but a poor figure in that place of learning. He was idle, penniless, and fond of pleasure; he learned his way early to the pawn-broker's shop. He wrote ballads, they say, for the street-singers, who paid him a crown for his poem; and his pleasure was to steal out at night and hear the verses sung. He was chastised by his tutor for giving a dance in his rooms, and took the box on the ear so much to heart that he packed up his all, pawned his books and little property, and disappeared from college and family. He said he intended to go to America; but when his money was spent, the young prodigal came home ruefully, and the good folks there killed their calf (it was but a lean one) and welcomed him back.

After college he hung about his mother's house, and lived for some years the life of a buckeen, — passed a month with this relation and that, a year with one patron, and a great deal of time at the public-house. Tired of this life, it was resolved that he should go to London, and study at the Temple; but he got no farther on the road to London and the woolsack than Dublin, where he gambled away the fifty pounds given him for his outfit, and whence he returned to the indefatigable forgiveness of home. Then he determined to be a doctor, and Uncle Contarine helped him to a couple of years at Edinburgh. Then from Edinburgh he felt that he ought to hear the famous professors of Leyden and Paris, and wrote most amus-

ing pompous letters to his uncle about the great Farheim, Du Petit, and Duhamel du Monceau, whose lectures he proposed to follow. If Uncle Contarine believed those letters; if Oliver's mother believed that story which the youth related, of his going to Cork with the purpose of embarking for America, of his having paid his passenger money and having sent his kit on board, of the anonymous captain sailing away with Oliver's valuable luggage in a nameless ship, never to return, — if Uncle Contarine and the mother at Ballymahon believed his stories, they must have been a very simple pair, as it was a very simple rogue indeed who cheated them. When the lad, after failing in his clerical examinations, after failing in his plan for studying the law, took leave of these projects and of his parents and set out for Edinburgh, he saw mother and uncle, and lazy Ballymahon, and green native turf and sparkling river for the last time. He was never to look on Old Ireland more, and only in fancy revisit her.

“But me not destined such delights to share,  
My prime of life in wandering spent and care,  
Impelled, with steps unceasing, to pursue  
Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view  
That like the circle bounding earth and skies  
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;  
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,  
And find no spot of all the world my own.”

I spoke in a former lecture of that high courage which enabled Fielding, in spite of disease, remorse, and poverty, always to retain a cheerful spirit and to keep his manly benevolence and love of truth intact, — as if these treasures had been confided to him for the public benefit, and he was accountable to posterity for their honorable employ; and a constancy equally happy and admirable. I think was shown by Goldsmith, whose sweet and friendly nature bloomed kindly always in the midst of a life's storm and rain and bitter weather. The poor fellow was never so friendless but he could befriend some one; never so pinched and wretched but he could give of his crust, and speak his word of compassion. If he had but his flute left, he could give that, and make the children happy in the dreary London court. He could give the coals in that queer coal-scuttle we read of to his neighbor; he could give away his

blankets in college to the poor widow, and warm himself as he best might in the feathers; he could pawn his coat, to save his landlord from jail. When he was a school-usher he spent his earnings in treats for the boys, and the good-natured schoolmaster's wife said justly that she ought to keep Mr. Goldsmith's money as well as the young gentlemen's. When he met his pupils in later life, nothing would satisfy the Doctor but he must treat them still. "Have you seen the print of me after Sir Joshua Reynolds?" he asked of one of his old pupils. "Not seen it! Not bought it! Sure, Jack, if your picture had been published, I'd not have been without it half-an-hour." His purse and his heart were everybody's, and his friend's as much as his own. When he was at the height of his reputation, and the Earl of Northumberland, going as Lord Lieutenant to Ireland, asked if he could be of any service to Doctor Goldsmith, Goldsmith recommended his brother and not himself to the great man. "My patrons," he gallantly said, "are the booksellers, and I want no others." Hard patrons they were, and hard work he did; but he did not complain much. If in his early writings some bitter words escaped him, some allusions to neglect and poverty, he withdrew these expressions when his Works were republished, and better days seemed to open for him; and he did not dare to complain that printer and publisher had overlooked his merit or left him poor. The Court's face was turned from honest Oliver; the Court patronized Beattie. The fashion did not shine on him; fashion adored Sterne; fashion pronounced Kelly to be the great writer of comedy of his day. A little — not ill-humor — but plaintiveness — a little betrayal of wounded pride which he showed renders him not the less amiable. The author of the *Vicar of Wakefield* had a right to protest when Newbery kept back the manuscript for two years; had a right to be a little peevish with Sterne, — a little angry when Colman's actors declined their parts in his delightful comedy, when the manager refused to have a scene painted for it and pronounced its damnation before hearing. He had not the great public with him; but he had the noble Johnson and the admirable Reynolds and the great Gibbon and the great Burke and the great Fox, — friends and admirers illustrious indeed, as famous as those who, fifty years before, sat round Pope's table.

Nobody knows, and I dare say Goldsmith's buoyant temper kept

no account of, all the pains which he endured during the early period of his literary career. Should any man of letters in our day have to bear up against such, Heaven grant he may come out of the period of misfortune with such a pure, kind heart as that which Goldsmith obstinately bore in his breast! The insults to which he had to submit were shocking to read of,—slander, contumely, vulgar satire, brutal malignity, perverting his commonest motives and actions. He had his share of these; and one's anger is roused at reading of them, as it is at seeing a woman insulted or a child assaulted, at the notion that a creature so very gentle and weak, and full of love, should have to suffer so. And he had worse than insult to undergo,—to own to fault, and deprecate the anger of ruffians. There is a letter of his extant to one Griffiths, a bookseller, in which poor Goldsmith is forced to confess that certain books sent by Griffiths are in the hands of a friend from whom Goldsmith had been forced to borrow money. "He was wild, sir," Johnson said, speaking of Goldsmith to Boswell, with his great, wise benevolence and noble mercifulness of heart,—"Dr. Goldsmith was wild, sir; but he is no more." Ah! if we pity the good and weak man who suffers undeservedly, let us deal very gently with him from whom misery extorts not only tears but shame; let us think humbly and charitably of the human nature that suffers so sadly and falls so low. Whose turn may it be to-morrow? What weak heart, confident before trial, may not succumb under temptation invincible? Cover the good man who has been vanquished,—cover his face and pass on.

For the last half-dozen years of his life Goldsmith was far removed from the pressure of any ignoble necessity, and in the receipt, indeed, of a pretty large income from the booksellers, his patrons. Had he lived but a few years more, his public fame would have been as great as his private reputation, and he might have enjoyed alive part of that esteem which his country has ever since paid to the vivid and versatile genius who has touched on almost every subject of literature, and touched nothing that he did not adorn. Except in rare instances, a man is known in our profession and esteemed as a skilful workman years before the lucky hit which trebles his usual gains, and stamps him a popular author. In the strength of his age and the dawn of his reputation, having for backers and

friends the most illustrious literary men of his time, fame and prosperity might have been in store for Goldsmith had fate so willed it, and at forty-six had not sudden disease taken him off. I say prosperity rather than competence; for it is probable that no sum could have put order into his affairs, or sufficed for his irrecoverable habits of dissipation. It must be remembered that he owed £2000 when he died. "Was ever poet," Johnson asked, "so trusted before?" As has been the case with many another good fellow of his nation, his life was tracked and his substance wasted by crowds of hungry beggars and lazy dependents. If they came at a lucky time (and be sure they knew his affairs better than he did himself, and watched his pay-day), he gave them of his money; if they begged on empty-purse day, he gave them his promissory bills, or he treated them to a tavern where he had credit, or he obliged them with an order upon honest Mr. Filby for coats,—for which he paid as long as he could earn, and until the shears of Filby were to cut for him no more. Staggering under a load of debt and labor; tracked by bailiffs and reproachful creditors; running from a hundred poor dependents, whose appealing looks were perhaps the hardest of all pains for him to bear; devising fevered plans for the morrow, new histories, new comedies, all sorts of new literary schemes; flying from all these into seclusion, and out of seclusion into pleasure,—at last, at five-and-forty death seized him and closed his career.

The younger Colman has left a touching reminiscence of him: "I was only five years old," he says, "when Goldsmith took me on his knee one evening whilst he was drinking coffee with my father, and began to play with me, — which amiable act I returned, with the ingratitude of a peevish brat, by giving him a very smart slap on the face: it must have been a tingler, for it left the marks of my spiteful paw on his cheek. This infantile outrage was followed by summary justice, and I was locked up by my indignant father in an adjoining room to undergo solitary imprisonment in the dark. Here I began to howl and scream most abominably, which was no bad step toward my liberation, since those who were not inclined to pity me might be likely to set me free for the purpose of abating a nuisance."

"At length a generous friend appeared to extricate me from jeopardy; and that generous friend was no other than the man I had so wantonly molested by assault and battery. It was the tender-hearted Doctor himself, with a lighted candle in his hand and a smile upon his countenance, which was still partially red from the effects of my petulance. I sulked and sobbed as he fondled and soothed, till I began to brighten. Goldsmith seized the propitious moment of returning good-humor, when he put down the candle and began to conjure. He placed three hats, which happened to be in the room, and a shilling under each: the shillings, he told me, were England, France, and Spain. 'Hey, presto cockalorum!' cried the Doctor; and lo, on uncovering the shillings, which had been dispersed each beneath a separate hat, they were all found congregated under one! I was no politician at five years old, and therefore might not have wondered at the sudden revolution which brought England, France, and Spain all under one crown; but as also I was no conjuror, it amazed me beyond measure. . . . From that time, whenever the Doctor came to visit my father, 'I plucked his gown to share the good man's smile;' a game at romps constantly ensued, and we were always cordial friends and merry playfellows. Our unequal companionship varied somewhat as to sports as I grew older; but it did not last long: my senior playmate died in his forty-fifth year, when I had attained my eleventh. . . . In all the numerous accounts of his virtues and foibles, his genius and absurdities, his knowledge of nature and ignorance of the world, his 'compassion for another's woes' was always predominant; and my trivial story of his humoring a forward child weighs but as a feather in the recorded scale of his benevolence."

Think of him reckless, thriftless, vain, if you like, — but merciful, gentle, generous, full of love and pity. He passes out of our life, and goes to render his account beyond it. Think of the poor pensioners weeping at his grave; think of the noble spirits that admired and deplored him; think of the righteous pen that wrote his epitaph, and of the wonderful and unanimous response of affection with which the world has paid back the love he gave it. His humor delighting us still, his song fresh and beautiful as when he first charmed with it, his words in all our mouths, his very weaknesses

beloved and familiar, — his benevolent spirit seems still to smile upon us, to do gentle kindnesses, to succor with sweet charity; to soothe, caress, and forgive; to plead with the fortunate for the unhappy and the poor.

### EXERCISES

- I. List the chief qualities that you find in some historic figure, such as Oliver Cromwell, Louis XIV, Alexander Hamilton. Then make a chronological list of the dates in the life. Compare the two lists and determine how many members of the second list need to be included to make an expository account intelligible. Do you find other members which, though not really necessary, are so interesting as to be worth including? Can you establish any final general law about the relation of dates and qualities? Make the same experiment upon the life of some one of your acquaintances.
- II. What was the character of Michael Henchard, the chief figure in Thomas Hardy's novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, that enabled him to write the following as his epitaph? On the basis of the epitaph write a life of Michael Henchard.

*Michael Henchard's Will*

That Elizabeth — Jane Farfae be not told of my death, or  
 made to grieve on account of me.  
 & that I be not bury'd in consecrated ground.  
 & that no sexton be asked to toll the bell.  
 & that nobody is wished to see my dead body.  
 & that no mourners walk behind me at my funeral.  
 & that no flours be planted on my grave.  
 & that no man remember me.  
 To this I put my name.

Michael Henchard.

- III. Write an obituary notice of an acquaintance of yours; of the political "boss" of your town, county, state; of Abraham Lincoln; of Ulysses S. Grant before he awoke to his opportunities, in the Civil War, and another of him at the time of his death; of Theodore Roosevelt before he formed the Progressive Party and another of him after the election of 1916. Try in each case to give the reader a knowledge of the character and of the events in the life.
- IV. How much basis have you for making an estimate of the people of whom the following were said, if you limit your knowledge to the remark?
  1. "To know her was a liberal education."
  2. "He was the homeliest man that came up before Troy."

3. "No man ever came out of his presence without being braver than when he went in."
4. "He never said a stupid thing and never did a wise one."
5. "He was a very perfect gentle knight."
6. "I never knew him to do a mean act."

What conclusion do you draw as to the usefulness of general remarks about character?

- V. What relation do you find between personality and character? On which can you more surely depend for making a just estimate? Which do contemporaries of a subject for biography usually emphasize?
- VI. Explain how the mistake was possible by which Daniel Webster's celebrated *Seventh of March Speech* was interpreted at the time of delivery as a betrayal of Webster's principles, although later it was regarded as a speech of real integrity.
- VII. Explain how a man like Thomas Jefferson can be regarded by many as a great statesman and by others, such as Mrs. Gertrude Atherton for example, as a disgustingly vulgar person, almost a rascal. What light does your explanation throw upon the duties and dangers of writing biography?
- VIII. What light do the following remarks throw upon the speakers? How much justification would you feel in using the remarks as basis for biographical estimate?
  1. "I would rather be right than President!"
  2. "The state? I am the state!"
  3. "The public be damned!"
  4. "If they appoint me street scavenger I will so dignify the office by dutiful service that every one will clamor for it."
  5. "Gentlemen, I am an unconscionable time a-dying."
  6. "When you find something that you are afraid to do, do it at once!"
  7. "I never asked a favor of any man."
  8. "We have n't begun to fight!"
- IX. Make the outline for an expository biography of one of the large figures of history, including the important events and showing the relations with contemporaries and the effect upon them. Then make a similar outline for the biography of some comparatively humble person of whom you know who has affected a more restricted group of contemporaries. Compare the two with a view to making this statement: As the great man was to his large group, so the lesser man was to his smaller group. What light does this shed on the individual life without regard to station in society?
- X. Write a life of Napoleon from the point of view of Wellington, of Prince Metternich, of Louis Philippe; a life of Robert Burns from the point of view of a country parson, of François Villon (supposing that Villon knew Burns), of William Shakespeare; a life of Michael Angelo from the point of view of an art student, of a humble wor-

shiper in St. Peter's; a life of Richard Croker from the point of view of a ward boss, of a widow who has received coal for years from Tammany Hall, of an old-time gentleman in New York City; a life of Andrew Carnegie from the point of view of a laborer in the steel mills, of a spinster librarian in a small quiet town, of a college senior who is a member of the I.W.W., of a holder of shares in the steel trust; a life of Edison from the point of view of an artist who prefers candles to electricity, of a farmer's wife who no longer has to clean a multitude of lamps; a life of Jane Addams from the point of view of a political gangster, of a poor Italian woman whom Miss Addams has befriended, of a college girl who has a vision of woman's larger usefulness.

- XI. Write the life of a man who has just been elected to some office of prominence, such as a seat in the state senate or perhaps to the national house of representatives, and who is expected by all his friends and acquaintances to make a brilliant record. Then write another of the same man who has ignominiously failed to meet expectations and who has come back to his home town with a ruined reputation. Try to take the point of view of a person who does not know that the career is to fail, and then see how you will modify the whole account in the second life.
- XII. What is the central motive in Goldsmith's life as found by Thackeray? How does he bring out his conception of Goldsmith? Make an outline of the article in which you will list the various events in Goldsmith's life. Make another outline to show wherein the character and quality of the man are shown. Is enough given in each case to make sufficient knowledge on the reader's part? Do you think that Thackeray overemphasizes the sentimental appeal of Goldsmith's weaknesses and his mellow kindness? Do you find any element of information about the man conspicuously lacking, as, for instance, a statement of Goldsmith's friendships, his effect upon his times, or his beliefs? Is there any lack of imaginative sympathy on the part of Thackeray? Suppose that an efficient business man had written the article, would Goldsmith's lack of responsibility have escaped so easily? In the light of your answer to the preceding question do you think that the article is really fair?

*Translation of Béranger's poem (page 285)*

' Cast upon this ball, plain, insignificant and suffering; choked in the crowd, through not being tall enough; my lips utter a piteous complaint. God says to me, "Sing, child, sing." To sing, or I mistake, is my task here below. Will not all those whom I thus amuse love me?

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GATHERING OF MATERIAL FOR WRITING

Two main sources exist from which you can get the material for expository themes: books, including magazines and papers; and lectures or interviews of any kind. Libraries differ greatly in the degree of convenience, and some lecturers are much more readily intelligible than others, and their lectures much more easily codified in notes. Even the most conveniently arranged library, with the most accommodating librarian, is rather formidable unless one knows the method of approach. And until one has thought out the problem of taking notes from lectures, even the most intelligible speaker presents great difficulties. Perhaps a few words here will be of some use in unriddling the mysteries.

First of all a word needs to be said about the greatest slavery of modern times — slavery to the printed word. "I read it in a book!" is still for many people sufficient reason for believing anything, however untrue, illogical, impossible it may be. It is well to remember that nearly everybody writes books and yet very few of us are wise. Obviously, not everything can be authoritative, especially when it is contradicted in the next book. A reader without a good steady sense of balance, a shrewd determination to weigh what he reads and judge of its value for himself is as helpless as a man in a whirlpool. You need not be too stiff-necked toward a book, need not deny for the mere sake of denial, but you do need to stand off and regard every book with reasonable caution. Sometimes you can see for yourself that what is said is not true. Sometimes you can at once feel that the spirit of the book is unsafe, wild, unthinking. Sometimes you will detect at once a blinding prejudice.

Then be cautious. If the subject is unknown to you, so that you have no safe basis for judgment about it, you are, to look the matter squarely in the face, at the mercy of the book. But shrewd inquiries as to the author's reputation, his opportunities for knowledge of the subject, and an ever-watchful eye for reasonableness and good judgment, will save you from many mistakes. And always remember that the mere fact of a statement's being in print does not make it more true than it was when merely oral. Don't, then, believe a printed statement which you would hotly deny if you heard it from the lips of some one. It is a matter of intellectual self-respect to read and judge, not to read and blindly swallow.

Whether you read or listen, you will need to make notes. It would be delightful if our flattering feeling that we can remember whatever we read or hear were true — the trouble is, it is not. It is better to play safe and have the record in notes, than to be too independent and find a blank in your mind when time to write arrives.

The chief virtue in note-taking is economy. Economy saves time, space, effort. The three interweave and are inextricable, in the total, but may be somewhat distinguished. As to time: there is no virtue whatever in slaving for hours over notes that need only a few minutes. Notes are tools: their object is temporary, to be of service for composition or future reference; they are not an object in themselves. Do not worship them. On the other hand, since dull tools will not cut, don't slight them. No greater pity can exist than for the pale student who wrinkles her brow — it usually is *her* brow — and attempts to make of notes a complete transcription of a lecture or a book, with each comma and every letter in proper sequence joined — only to pack the notes away in a box in the attic — or perhaps burn them! A builder who should have too meticulous care for his scaffolding is in danger of never seeing his building completed.

Notes seek essentials, and therefore time should not be wasted on non-essentials. But, since slovenly, ill-assorted, illegible notes require extraordinary time for deciphering and arranging, it is of the greatest importance that you conserve your future minutes by making your notes neat, ordered, legible. Any abbreviations that you can surely remember are most useful. A complete sentence — which really has no special need for completeness — that you cannot read is worthless, but a few words that indicate the gist of the thought, and are immediately legible, are most valuable. Moreover, if you take time enough for every word, you are in danger of becoming so engrossed in penmanship as to lose the broad sweep of the lecture or book. Notes must drive toward unity and away from chaos. Your first principle, then, should be to set down neatly what will be of real service, and let the rest go.

As to space — any one who has made manuscripts from notes has learned how irritating, how bewildering a huge mass of material can be. Some subjects require such a mass, and in such a case the note-taker will use as much space as he needs. But economy, which is the cardinal virtue, will require as little diffusion, as great concentration as possible. If you can succeed in including everything of value on one sheet, instead of scattering it over several, you are to be congratulated. Only, be sure that you do not neglect something of real value. You can often save much space and effort and the use of stores of connecting words and phrases if you will indent and subordinate sub-topics so that the eye will show the relation at once. Such practice is admirable mental training, also, for it teaches the listener or reader to keep his brain detached for seeing relationships, for grasping the parts in relation to the whole and to each other. If interesting remarks which do not bear directly upon the main subject attract with sufficient intensity to make record worth while, set them down in brackets, to indicate their nature.

Remembering, then, that a concentrated barrage is of more value in attack than scattered fire, use as little space as may suffice for the essentials. That is the second principle.

As to effort, remember that the old sea-captain whose boat was so leaky that he declared he had pumped the whole Atlantic through it on one voyage would have entered port more easily with a better boat. If you do not take time and pains for grouping and ordering as you make your notes, be sure that you will have much pumping to do when the article is to be made. Grouping and ordering require concentration in reading or listening — but there is no harm in that. You ought to be able to write one thing and listen to another at the same time. Watch especially for any indication in a lecture of change in topic. And don't be bothered by the demands of formal rhetoric: if a complete sentence stands in your way, set your foot on it and "get the stuff." And, of course, avoid a feverish desire to set down every word that may be uttered; any one who has seen the notebooks of students in which reports of lectures begin with such records as "This morning, in pursuance of our plan, we shall consider the topic mentioned last time, namely, — etc." become aware of the enormous waste of energy that college students show. Essentials, set down in athletic leanness — that is the ideal.

In taking notes from books, people differ greatly. Some use a separate slip for each note, and much can be said in commendation of this system. Some are able to heap everything together and then divine where each topic is. In any case, strive for economy, catch the "high spots," and as far as possible keep like with like, notes on the same topic together. It is always well, often imperative, to jot down the source of each note, so that you can either verify or later judge of the value in the light of the worth of the source.

Note-taking, in other words, is a matter of brains and common sense: brains to see what is important, and sense

to see that neatness and order are essential to true economy, the great virtue of notes.

With the best of intentions, then, you enter the library. Since each library is arranged on a somewhat individual scheme, and different collections have different materials, you will need to examine the individual library. A wise student will inquire at the desk for any pamphlet that may help to unriddle the special system. Librarians are benevolent people, do not wish to choke you, and are glad to answer any reasonable question. If your questions are formless, if you really do not know what you want, sit down on the steps and think it over until you do, and then enter boldly and politely ask for information. Don't, if you wish to learn about ship subsidies, for example, stroll in and inquire for "Some'n 'bout boats?" The complimentarily implied power of reading your mind is not especially welcome to even a librarian who is subject to vanity — and incidentally he may think that you are irresponsible. Any one who has been connected with a college library knows that the notorious questions such as "Have you Homer's Eyelid?" are not uncommon — and seldom bring desired results.

Since you have entered for information, summon all your resourcefulness to try every possibility before you agree that there is no help for you there. You can use the Card Catalogue, the Reference Books, the Indexes, Year-Books and Magazine Guides, and finally, if every other source fails, can lay your troubles before the librarian — but not until you have fought bravely. Too many students are faint-hearted: if they wish for information about, let us say, employers' liability, and do not at once find a package of information ready-wrapped, they sigh, and then smile, and then brightly inform the instructor, "The library has n't a single word about that subject!" The Card Catalogue does not list employers' liability, let us say, and you do not know any authors who have written on the subject. Do not

despair; look up *insurance*, *workmen*, *accidents*, *social legislation*, *government help*, and other such titles until your brain can think of nothing more. Only then resort to outside help.

The Card Catalogue will contain a card for each book in the library: if you know the title, look for it. If you know the author but not the title, look for the "author card." If you know neither author nor title, look for the general subject heading. For each book will usually have the three cards of subject, author, and title. If the subject is a broad one, such, for example, as *Engineering*, do not set yourself the task of looking through every card, but, if you wish for a treatise on the history of engineering, look for the word *History*, in the engineering cards, and then examine what books may be collected under that heading. If you find cross references, that is, a recommendation to "see" other individual cards, or other subject headings, do not overlook the chance to gain added information.

Most of us too often forget the encyclopædias. If the catalogue has been exhausted, then see what the encyclopædias may contain. Look in the volume that contains the index, first, for often a part of an article will tell you exactly what you wish, but the article as a whole will not be listed under the subject that you are seeking. The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the *New International*, the *Nelson's Loose Leaf* will be of service on general topics. For agriculture consult *Bailey's Encyclopædia*. For religion see the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (Scribner), the *Jewish Encyclopædia*, the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge* (Funk and Wagnalls), the *Catholic Encyclopædia* (Robert Appleton).

For dictionaries you will find the *Murray's New English Dictionary*, often called the *Oxford Dictionary*, *The Standard Dictionary*, *The Century*, *Webster's New International*, *Black's Law Dictionary* and others.

Often you will wish to find contemporary, immediate material. The magazines are regularly catalogued in the *Reader's Guide*, month by month, with a combined quarterly and yearly and then occasional catalogue, with the articles listed under the subject and the title or author. Use your resourcefulness here, as you did in the card catalogue, and do not give up. *Poole's Index* will also help.

Many annuals are of value. The *World Almanac* has a bewildering mass of information, as does the *Eagle Almanac* for New York City and Long Island especially. The *Canadian Annual Review*, the *Statesman's Year-Book*, *Heaton's Annual* (Canadian), the *New International Year Book*, which is "a compendium of the world's progress for the year," the *Annual Register* (English), the *Navy League Annual* (English, but inclusive), and the *American Year-Book*, among others, will be of service. Often these books will give you the odd bit of information that you have hunted for in vain elsewhere. For engineering, the *Engineering Index* (monthly and collected) is useful.

For biography you will find Stephen's *Dictionary of National Biography* useful, and Lamb's *Biographical Dictionary of the United States*. Do not forget the *Who's Who*, the *Who's Who in America*, and the corresponding foreign books for brief information about current people of note.

For what may be called scattered information you can go to the *American Library Association Index* to general literature, *The Information Quarterly* (Bowker), *The Book Review Digest* (Wilson), *The United States Catalog* (with its annual *Cumulative Book Index*), and the (annual) *English Catalogue of Books*.

In using a book, employ the Table of Contents and the Index to save time. For example, you will thus be referred to page 157 for what you want. If instead you begin to hunt page by page, you will find that after you have patiently run your eyes back and forth over the first 156 pages, your

brain will be less responsive than you would wish when you finally arrive at page 157. Moreover, there is all that time lost!

Often individual libraries have compiled lists of their own books on various subjects. If you can find such lists, use them.

In other words, the search for material and the taking of notes is a matter of strategy: it requires that the seeker use his wits, plan his campaign, find what is available, and in the briefest time compatible with thoroughness assimilate whatever of it is of value. Caution and indefatigable zeal and resourcefulness — these are almost sure to win the day.

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